

ANIMATION

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Animation Nations

The State of America's
Toon Boom
Korea's 21st Century
Goals

Piet Kroon on
Animating in Two
Worlds

Jackie Leger on
Suzan Pitt



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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Harvey Deneroff

Animation Families

Last month, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art imported a Fleischer retrospective from American Museum of the Moving Image in New York City and curated by Mark Langer. On Friday, January 10, there was a reception in honor of animator Myron Waldman and Max Fleischer's son, Richard. Langer and the Museum took advantage of the occasion to gather all the ex-Fleischer people and/or their families they could find. It was perhaps the last opportunity to have such a gathering while some of the original Fleischer artists were still alive.

The unusual part for me was being invited not as a member of the press or as an animation historian, but because my father had worked for the Fleischer Studios. As an animation historian, this fact had many times helped pave the way in interviewing my father's friends and colleagues. Such was the small community of artists that was the New York animation industry of the 1930s and 40s, even if they did not know him, they at least knew of him. To tell the truth, it was hard for me to conceive of being the subject of being the subject of any sort of historical inquiry.

When Jerry Beck once tried to find out about my father and how it was to be the adult son of an animator, I was taken aback. Why would he want to know



such things? After all, my father died when I was young and he shouldn't waste his time with me!

However, with my seven-year-old daughter, Allegra, I am not above pointing out that her grandfather Joe had actually worked on some of the Betty Boop and Popeye cartoons she likes so much. But it was not until the end of the reception, when all the ex-Fleischer people and their families were asked to pose for a group picture that she finally realized that she was, in her words, "part of the Fleischer family." It was a proud moment for me, that seemed somehow to provide a sense of closure.

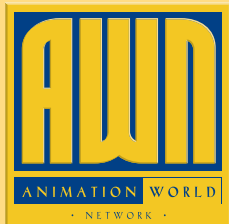
When I first started doing research on the 1937 Fleischer strike, I only half jokingly said I was only doing it to have a chance to meet my father's friends. As it turned out, my researches did help me develop a clearer picture of who my father was, as well as who I was.

My feelings, if anything, were only deepened, as it was only a

few days before that I heard of the death of Al Eugster. I had only met him briefly when I dropped in to see him at Kim and Gifford, in New York, back in 1979 or 80. He was also a friend of my father's and somewhere I still have the kind letter he wrote him when he was terminally ill. Yet, it was only after hearing of Eugster's death did I come to realize that after his passing, that he was responsible in a way I hadn't thought of before for my interest in animation.

You see, Eugster was one of my father's classmates in the Art program at Cooper Union, in New York, in the late 20s and early 30s. (This was still a time when Cooper Union, a richly endowed private school, was tuition free.) The class graduated in the midst of the Great Depression, when jobs, especially for an artist, were very scarce. However, as animator Eddie Rehberg recalled, Eugster was the only student who always came to class dressed in a good suit. When asked where he got his money, Eugster explained that he was working in animation. As a result, my father, Rehberg and several others followed him into the business—a decision which certainly influenced my career choices many years later.

January also saw the passing of Louise Beaudet and Renzo Kinoshita, two people who dedicated their lives to helping the



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animation community define itself.

When I was a budding animation historian, Beaudet was one of my heros. (It was a sentiment that I'm sure was shared by many others.) After all, she was the curator in charge of animation at the Cinémathèque Québécois, the only film archive that specialized in animation! In the days before the current boom, when animation was still largely considered a marginal activity, Beaudet and the Cinémathèque provided a sense of validation for filmmakers and historians alike, and helped pave the way for the current widespread interest in animation. Thus, I was delighted when she agreed to write a story on the Cinémathèque, when I wanted to start a series on occasional pieces on archival resources for the *Society of Animation Studies Newsletter*.

Renzo Kinoshita was an accomplished filmmaker, but he is perhaps most widely thought of as being synonymous with ASIFA-Japan, an organization he help found and nurture. Along with his wife and collaborator, Sayoko, he also had more than a little to do with starting the Hiroshima International Animation Festival. As such, he became a vital cog in Japan's animation culture. And while Renzo and Louise were never part of my immediate animation family, as Al Eugster was, in a very real sense they were.

—Harvey Deneroff
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Where the Action Is

by Harvey Deneroff

The American animation industry is riding high these days in more ways than one. Its sheer size and dominance in both the domestic and most international markets has made it the envy of most other animation nations. And for better or worse, it's where the action is.

Los Angeles studios have now become home base for an increasingly international cadre of animation artists. The glamour and money that have long attracted their live-action brethren to Hollywood are now working their magic in the frame-by-frame world.

Only a few years ago, it was something of an oxymoron to talk about animation art and Hollywood in the same breadth. After all, its "Golden Age" had long since disappeared into a nostalgic haze—a concept glorified some 30 years ago in André Martins' magnificent poster-sized chart on the "Origine et âge d'or du dessin animé américain de 1906 à 1941/Origin and Golden Age of the American Cartoon Film, 1906-1941." While there were there have been revisionists who have disputed the parameters of this period, there was no dispute that it represented an era that was no more.

However, the recent boom has caused most commentators to speak of a new Golden Age. In

terms of the sheer volume of animation being turned out and money being earned, there has



Christmas card from Warner Bros. displaying the fruits of the Time-Warner/Turner Broadcasting merger.

never been any period like it in the history of the medium. Animated features are almost becoming a commonplace in theaters, while the direct-to-video market is providing an increasingly lucrative market for lower budgeted titles. Television production is not only expanding, but is showing an increasing willingness to venture out of the kiddie rut into more adult programming. The interactive realm, despite recent setbacks, promises continued expansion, especially as the introduction of DVD-ROM, with its increased storage capacity, should increase the demand for animation in terms of both volume and complexity. Finally, the increased use of animation in live-action films (as in *Mars Attacks!*)

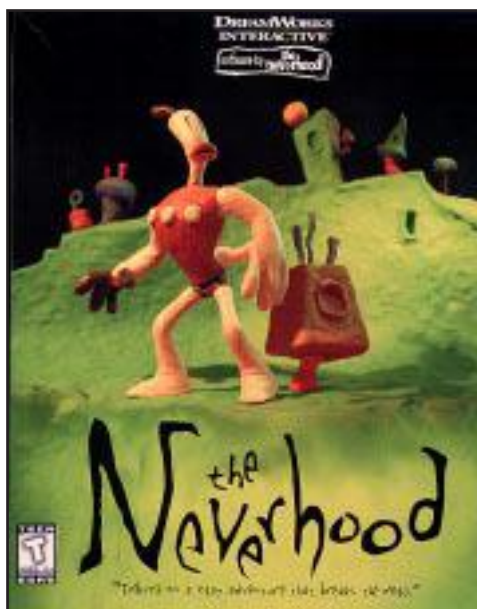
and of digital special effects (as in *Forest Gump*) have started to blur the line between live action and animation, providing even more employment for animation artists.

However, it is almost too easy to fall into the trap of characterizing the current era more in terms of expansion (of the number of animators, the number of theatrical films and their increasing box office returns) and to almost neglect looking at "artistic" side of things. Animation has been a stepchild so very long, it becomes

tempting to stand in awe of blockbusters like *The Lion King* and quickly put aside any critical qualms one may have about them. For a film like *Space Jam*, the Warner Bros. publicity machine hyped the film's technical wizardry that to talk about anything else seemed like heresy. (Somewhat the same approach was taken by Disney in promoting *Toy Story*.)

Only a few years ago, it was something of an oxymoron to talk about animation art and Hollywood in the same breadth.

While the current batch of animated event films may often leave



DreamWorks SKG last year made its animated debut last year with its "clay adventure" CD-ROM, *The Neverhood*, via DreamWorks Interactive, a joint venture with Microsoft.

something to be desired, there is still much to be admired in American animation today, especially in television. After all, one rarely hears of "creator-driven" in the same way in theatrical circles as in television. Producers perhaps feel they can ill afford to allow the creative freedom in theatrical films that big name directors get in the live-action arena. Perhaps, as one wag pointed out to me, the reason most theatrical films follow the Disney fashion for using two or more directors on a film is not so much to share the workload, as it is to better control the creative process.

Merger Fever

Overhanging all this has been the specter of the recent wave of mergers and takeovers, along with the growth of new broadcast networks in the United States. The effect, especially in television, has been to effectively curtail market access. For instance, Disney's takeover of ABC effectively shut out most non-Disney companies from the networks Saturday morning line up. In addition, as a result of getting ABC, it took control of DIC

Entertainment, a major producer of TV animation for both the domestic and international market; if this was not enough, in a separate deal, it bought out New York-based Jumbo Pictures and promptly put a new version of *Doug* on ABC.

Time-Warner's merger with Turner Broadcasting, saw Turner Feature Animation absorbed by Warner Bros. Feature Animation, while Hanna-Barbera has now become a division of Warner Television Animation. Time-Warner, which controls the budding WB Network and several cable channels (including HBO, which has just set up its own animation studio) added several animation-friendly cable outlets, including the Cartoon Network, as well as the rights to the MGM cartoon library and the pre-1948 backlog of Warner Bros. cartoons.

Twentieth Century Fox has combined its highly successful Fox Children's Network with Saban, a leading international supplier of animation programming; Saban, in turn, continues its deal to handle children's programming for the Paramount-controlled UPN network.

Paramount, which was engulfed by Viacom a few years back, could always ask Saban to step aside and turn the job over to Nickelodeon, part of Viacom's MTV Networks. Nickelodeon, though, seems pre-occupied for the time being with doing more animation for its cable service and expanding into theatrical ani-

mation.

With Fox, WB and UPN tying up increasingly larger blocks of time of once independent TV stations, the American market for syndicated shows (i.e., programs sold directly to stations rather than to networks) has shrunk drastically. Even Disney has had to scale back on the syndication deals for its Disney Afternoon package, and now allows stations to broadcast less than its full package. However, given Disney's situation, I suspect the company will somehow endure this hardship; the same, however, cannot be said for studios who do not have their own television networks (terrestrial, cable or satellite) to rely on. The situation effectively precludes most overseas producers from making further inroads into the US TV market for the immediate future; the situation must be especially frustrating to Japanese companies, who have seen their product gain popularity in home video.

Theatrical Features

The most visible and seemingly most lucrative branch of the US animation industry lies in theatrical fea-



Doug, the flagship series of New York-based Jumbo Pictures, which was bought by Disney last year.



Space Jam.

tures. The field has been almost totally dominated by Disney since the alliance between Steven Spielberg and Don Bluth ended after *The Land Before Time* (1988). One after another, the films put up by various pretenders, ranging from Rich Animation (*The Swan Princess*) to MGM (*All Dogs Go to Heaven*) have fallen by the wayside. However, late last year, there were signs of erosion. The Ivan Reitman-Warner Bros. *Space Jam* generated enough money at the box office to demonstrate that someone else besides Disney can successfully market an animated event film. (The fact that the film's inflated budget may severely interfere with its profitability, is really of little concern in these matters.)

Animation has been a stepchild so very long, it becomes tempting to stand in awe of blockbusters like *The Lion King* and quickly put aside any critical qualms one may have about them.

The second and most important breakthrough was Mike Judge's *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* (MTV Animation) which has brought

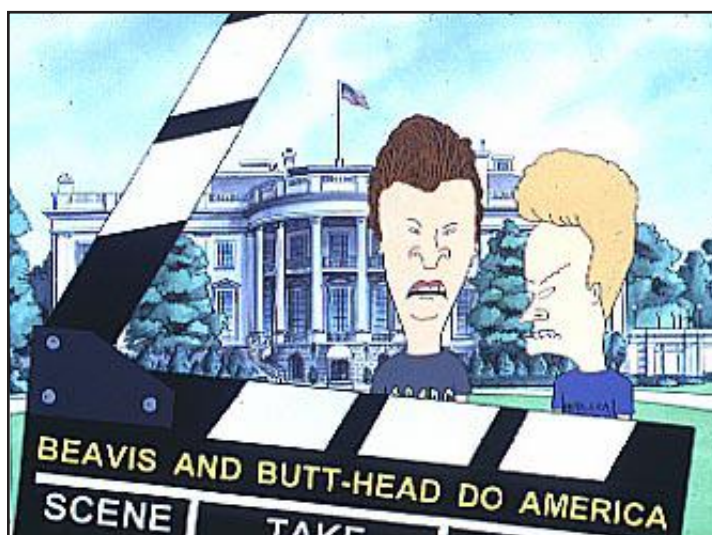
in more than half the money that *Space Jam* did, on a budget perhaps one-tenth its size. Besides laying the groundwork for theatrical versions of such shows as *The Simpsons*, it may very well rid the common misperception that animated features can only be successful if they appeal to kids. If it does open the doors to lower budgeted animated features aimed at older audiences, it will surely make *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* a landmark film.

In the meantime, MTV's sister company Nickelodeon is going ahead with a movie based on its popular *Rugrats* show from Klasky Csupo, which is most definitely kid friendly. This conceivably could be followed by a version of Jon Sciesak and Lane Smith's wacky children's book, *The Stinky Cheese Man*, to be directed (or at least co-directed) by Smith; like *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*, this is

would be done in New York (and possibly other animated features to be done by Nickelodeon). If so, the city will have finally reestablished itself as a major regional production center, a cachet it lost with the demise of Famous Studios, Terrytoons and the shift of animated commercial production to Hollywood in the 1960s.

In the meantime, Warner Bros., 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks are actively pursuing the Holy Grail of Disney-style animated blockbusters with their own in-house units. Warner Bros. Feature Animation, fresh from its rescue operation on *Space Jam* and bolstered by new talent absorbed from Turner Feature Animation, is betting on *The Quest for Camelot*, which will do battle during the Christmas season with Don Bluth's *Anastasia*, being done in Phoenix, Arizona, at Fox's new animation facility.

DreamWorks SKG is mounting the most ambitious assault on fortress Disney, with four animated features in the works, starting with the an epic-scaled biography of Moses, *The Prince of Egypt*, for 1998. The company is strongly hinting that it will not necessarily indulge in the excess of merchan-



Butt-head and Beavis on the set of their landmark feature debut, *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*.

dising hype and tie-ins that seem almost de rigeur for any major animated film these days. If this is really so, it would be a refreshing change and perhaps indicates DreamWorks' hopes that the film would be taken more seriously.

The company, spurred on by the success of *Toy Story*, last year bought a 40% interest in Pacific Data Images, a major computer animation house, and immediately put it to work on *Ants*, featuring the voice of Woody Allen; also in CGI is a version of William Steigs book, *Shrek*, to be done by DreamWorks Feature Animation itself, which will also use motion capture techniques. Warner Bros. will also chime in on the CGI front with a version of Ted Hughes' *Iron Giant* (*Iron Man*), which has been in development for several years.

Television

The announcement that the CBS will give up programming animation on Saturday mornings was remarkable only for the way it was almost treated as a nonevent. With NBC having done the same five years ago, that leaves ABC as the last of the original three terrestrial networks programming animation at that time of the week. But with ABC's Saturday mornings given almost entirely over to Disney product, the days of Saturday morning animation as we once knew it are now over.

While the major networks were decimated by such upstarts as the Fox Kids Network and Nickelodeon, their exit from the market does change the dynamics of the market somewhat. Though the licensing fees paid by the likes of CBS to producers had been cut over the past few years, it was still considerably more than that paid by most of its competi-



Klasky Csupo's *Rugrats* feature based on the popular TV show will be Nickelodeon Movie's first animated feature.



Dr. Katz, *Professional Therapist*, Comedy Central's prime time animated hit show.



Mike Judge's *King of the Hill*.

tors, (I've heard said that the reason that Nickelodeon has not dealt more with more traditional studios, is that they demanded higher licensing fees than Nickelodeon was willing to pay; while the differential has narrowed over the years, it remains significant.)

Despite this and the increased concentration of power in TV, production continues to increase. Of special note is the proliferation of prime time shows, mostly on cable, but also on-air. It is an aspect of television animation that is perhaps the best indicator of how far things have progressed over the last few years. Thus, after several fruitless attempts to cash in on the early popularity of *The Simpsons*, all doubts have vanished about the viability of programming animation in the evening hours, especially if they aimed at adults.

Cable's Nickelodeon continues to flex its muscles not only by increasing the number of animated shows it puts on, but by beginning to program such shows in the evening/prime time hours, including Craig Bartlett's *Hey Albert* and *Kablam!* Sister channel MTV will give us more episodes of *Beavis and Butt-head* along with its new spinoff, *Daria*, featuring BABH's only "intelligent character."

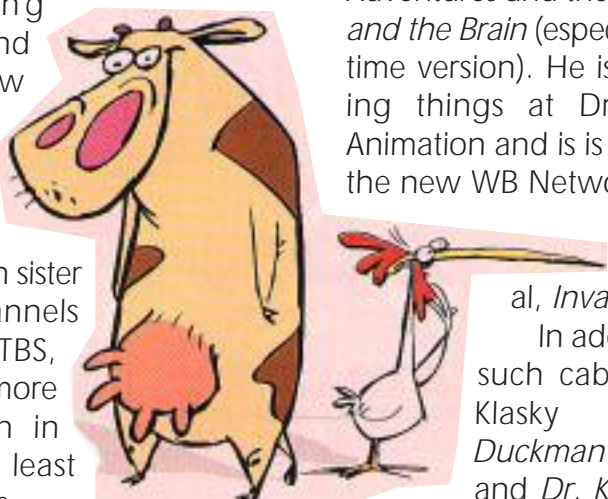
Of more interest though is what HBO is doing; a premium cable network noted for its top flight original movies, HBO also expanding into more adult animated fare. Thus, Ralph Bakshi, whose *New Adventures of Mighty Mouse* spurred the current rage of creator-driven shows (as well as bringing the talent of John Kricfalusi to the fore), will be returning to series television with *Spicy City*, which promises to be in the same raunchy mode as many of his theatrical films.



Ralph Bakshi's new HBO series, *Spicy City*.

HBO will also air a version of Todd McFarlane's comic book, *Spawn*, from its new in-house studio, along with more episodes of Hyperion's stylish *Fairy Tales for Every Child*, which offers multicultural renderings of familiar stories.

The Cartoon Network, despite its international success, still remains unseen on many US cable systems. But this has not stopped it from introducing more and more new shows each season. (They are also broadcast on sister cable channels TNT and TBS, which are more widely seen in the US.). At least one a year is being based on its widely publicized World Premiere Toons, which are essen-



Hanna-Barbera's *Cow and Chicken*.

tially series pilots dressed up as old-fashioned cartoons. Nevertheless, it has provided a vehicle for reaching out to both young filmmakers and such veterans as Ralph Bakshi (whose work was considered too risqué to be shown) and Bruno Bozetto. To date, *Cow and Chicken*, *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Johnny Bravo* have gone this route.

Among terrestrial broadcasters, Fox is betting on Mike Judge's *King of the Hill*, which is being shown right after *The Simpsons*. Produced concurrently with *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*, Judge's new

show, despite its rather tentative nature of its early episodes, is remarkable for its sympathetic portrayal of a middle American family, which seems a hell of a lot truer to life than most of today's TV sitcoms.

Steven Spielberg, whose company, Amblin, enjoyed a productive relationship with Warner Bros. in producing such shows as *Tiny Toon Adventures* and the delightful *Pinky and the Brain* (especially in its prime time version). He is now supervising things at DreamWorks TV Animation and is looking toward the new WB Network to debut his prime time adventure serial, *Invasion: America*.

In addition, there are such cable standbys as Klasky Csupo's *Duckman* (USA Network) and *Dr. Katz Professional Therapist* (Comedy Central).

The situation effectively precludes most overseas producers from making further inroads into the US TV market for the immediate future.

Home Video

The home video market has long been one of the animation industry's most lucrative outlets. Until recently, most attention in this arena has been focused on the video versions of such blockbusters as *Toy Story* and such classics as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. More recently, the direct-to-video market has exploded, what with Disney's two *Aladdin* sequels setting new sales records for original video productions. Universal Cartoon Studios is enjoying similar success, if on a lesser scale, with its follow ups to *The Land Before Time*. Both studios have stepped up production in this area, with Disney opening a new Canadian studio, with branches in Toronto and Vancouver, devoted strictly to making home video movies.

However, until the direct-to-video market starts to be more adventuresome, most of the interest will be in this month's long-delayed release of Richard Williams' *The Thief and the Cobbler* (even if it is in its bastardized version) and in the latest in anime.

Harvey Deneroff is Editor of Animation World Magazine; he also edits and publishes The Animation Report, an industry newsletter.

The English Lyon Conference

by Jean-Luc Ballaster

Telling the story of animation in France along with the evolution of the labor movement would certainly be of great interest, since animation is an art, a technique and an industry. It might take a whole book to do so, but that's not my objective. What I would like to do is to recall the turbulent times in the 1980s, when the microcosm that is French animation was deeply shaken by changes that were to change the profession's outlook on the economic and social levels, with deep repercussions on the cultural front, the results of which are still being felt in the audio-visual field.

In response to the 1983 Lyons Conference, which brought together both public authorities and professionals in the field, the French Minister of Culture decided to implement a plan to boost the French animation industry, a sector which had great potential for job creation. That plan was called: *Plan Image*.

The SNTPT (National Union of Workers and Technicians of TV and Film Production) found itself at the forefront, since it had always fought to restructure that profession. Despite the mobilization of a great many professionals, the initiative only partly attained its objectives. Furthermore, the union suffered despite its stated analyses and claims that were taken into consideration by an increasing number of professionals. Thus, it might be helpful to analyze what led to this partial failure.

Today, all over the world, animation is experi-

Français Les Assises de Lyon

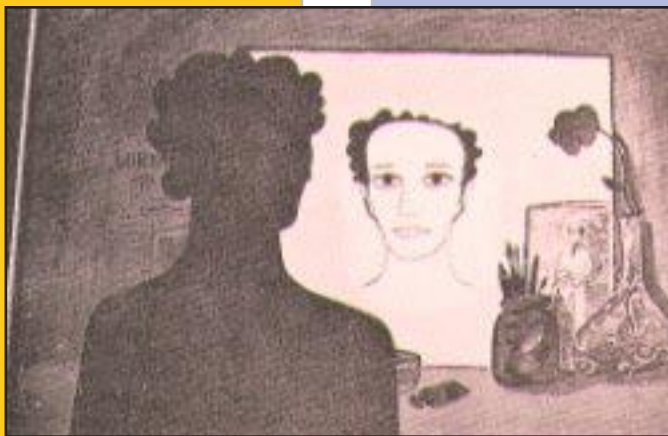
par Jean-Luc Ballester

L'Animation étant tout à la fois un Art, une technique et un secteur industriel, raconter l'histoire de l'animation en France en tentant d'aborder ces trois aspects, et en faisant le parallèle avec l'évolution du syndicalisme dans ce milieu serait certes du plus grand intérêt, mais nécessiterait pour le moins un ouvrage entier. Telle n'est pas mon ambition. Au début des années quatre-vingt, le microcosme de l'animation française fut secoué par des bouleversements qui allaient grandement modifier la physionomie de cette

profession sur le plan économique et social, avec de graves répercussions au niveau culturel : C'est sur cet épisode que je voudrais revenir, car il a laissé des traces dans le paysage audio-visuel.

En réponse aux assises de l'Animation qui en 1983 avaient réuni à Lyon l'ensemble de la profession et les pouvoirs publics, le Ministère de la Culture décida de mettre en

place un plan de relance du Dessin Animé Français, secteur industriel potentiellement créateur d'emplois, dit "Plan Image". Le SNTPT (Syndicat National des Techniciens et Travailleurs de la Production Cinématographique et de Télévision [Audio-visuel]), qui s'était toujours battu pour structurer cette profession artisanale, trouva tout naturellement sa place en première ligne de ce combat. Pourtant, malgré la mobilisation d'une grande partie de la profession, cette relance n'atteignit que partiellement ses objectifs. De plus, bien que les analyses et revendications que le Syndicat avait exposées publiquement depuis



Jean-François Laguionie's *L'acteur* (The Actor) (1974).

encing a new "Golden Age," and SNTPT is regaining its vitality and recruiting a new generation of technicians.

In order to understand the current situation in France, we need to look back at the past, not as an exercise in nostalgia, but to see what role the union played and what status it has today.

A Profession in Search of its Identity

SNTPT's Animated Cartoon Section was created in 1974. The aim was to give the profession the identity it needed to grow. The first two tasks the sector faced were to reinforce the idea of solidarity among individual animators and to help promote that profession within the animation industry. In order to achieve these goals, it was important to provide it with a basic agreement.

Initially, SNTPT unsuccessfully tried to include animation in the film industry's basic contract. At the same time, the union was able to sign a number of agreements were signed in the studios, particularly at Savec, a production company affiliated with the powerful *Mutuelle Generale de l'Education Nationale* (a teachers union) as well as 3A, the studio created by Jacques Rouxel, the creator of *Shadoks*, and Belokapi.

Rouxel's industrial films allowed him to stand apart from the usual "spaghetti" productions and allowed him to produce more ambitious works, such as films by Piotr Kamler and Michel Ocelot. Thanks to the help of Mgen, Savec was also able to turn out a great many short films, including those of Michel Gauthier. Belokapi, which started in 1968, was regularly involved in doing miniseries like *Plume d'Élan* by Philippe Landrot, *La Vache Normande* or *Les Minimos* by Gilles Gay. Firmly established in these studios, SNTPT had the opportunity to improve working conditions that allowed the gains in creativity and wages that followed.

Since its closing in 1977 of Idefix, created three years earlier by Uderzo and Goscinny, French animation had been plagued by inefficient equipment as well as a reduced number of technicians.

As the union stated its memorandum to the Ministry of Culture, "The lack of incentive to produce

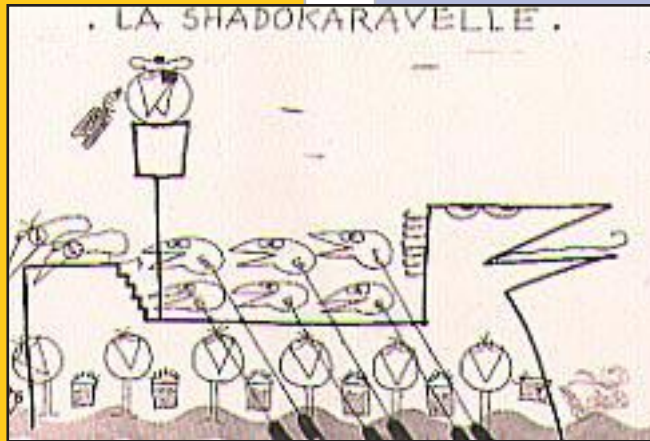
plusieurs années aient été prises en compte par un nombre croissant de professionnels, l'image du syndicat en sortit affaiblie.

Analyser ce qui s'est passé à l'époque peut nous aider à comprendre quelles furent les causes de ce demi-échec. Aujourd'hui, non seulement le dessin animé connaît dans le monde un nouvel "âge d'or", mais le SNTPT retrouve une certaine vitalité dans l'animation et draine de nouvelles générations de techniciens. Cette mise en perspective ne relève donc pas de la vaine nostalgie, mais doit permettre de mieux comprendre la situation actuelle de l'animation en France, quel rôle y joua le Syndicat et quelle place il occupe aujourd'hui.

Une profession à la recherche de son identité

C'est en 1974 que fut créé un secteur Animation au sein du SNTPT, afin de donner à cette profession l'identité dont elle avait besoin pour se développer. Les deux premières tâches de ce secteur furent de renforcer, chez ces individualistes que sont les animateurs, l'idée de solidarité, et de faire reconnaître cette profession dans les instances dont elle dépend. Pour cela, l'objectif principal fut tout naturellement de la doter d'une base conventionnelle.

Le SNTPT tenta d'abord de faire inclure l'animation dans la Convention Collective de la Production Cinématographique, sans succès à ce jour. Dans le même temps, plusieurs accords d'entreprise furent signés dans les studios où ce syndicat était parvenu à s'imposer, notamment à la Savec, entreprise de production dépendant de la puissante *Mutuelle Générale de l'Éducation Nationale*, et aux 3A, le studio fondé par Jacques Rouxel, créateur des *Shadoks*. Les films industriels de Rouxel qui tranchaient sur la production habituelle lui permirent, à côté de cette production "alimentaire" mais néanmoins créative, de produire des œuvres plus ambitieuses, comme les films de Piotr Kamler ou Michel Ocelot. La Savec, grâce au soutien de la Mgen, produisit un grand nombre de courts-métrage, dont ceux de Michel Gauthier. Belokapi, créé en 1968, avait une production régulière de petites séries (*Plume d'Élan*, de Philippe Landrot, *La vache Noiraude* ou *Les Minimos*, de Gilles Gay). Le SNTPT, bien implanté



Jacques Rouxel's *Les Shadoks* (*The Shadoks*) (1968).

has created structural weakness and made our companies noncompetitive." The industry could be divided into "small studios which were trying to survive," among them were those of Albert Champaux, Manuel Otero (Cinematic), or André Martin and Michel Boschet (Martin Boschet Films). The union was never able to establish itself in those studios, which were operating on a "once in a while" basis. Naturally, working conditions and wages were not guaranteed there.

Because of that, the assessment made by the 1983 Lyons Conference was alarming. While TV stations were broadcasting more and more animated shows for kids, fewer and fewer were made in France, despite the fact that some were conceived there (e.g., *Ulysse 31* by Nina Wolmark and Bernard Deries, or *L'Aventure de la Vie* by Albert Barille).

Most of the shows came from Japan or the US. Because it was still working at a craftsman's scale, France seemed unable to handle productions requiring large crews, tight schedules and competitive production costs. Even the commercial spot market was lost by French producers to their English colleagues.

If France were equipped with the means necessary to produce just half of the shows broadcast each year on the 3 major networks, that could have generated 500 jobs. That fact is all the more distressing when one realizes that animated cartoons, which were invented in France by Emile Reynaud and Emile Cohl, are an integral part of French cinema's cultural identity.

Rouxel's industrial films allowed him to stand apart from the usual "spaghetti" productions and allowed him to produce more ambitious works, such as films by Piotr Kamler and Michel Ocelot.

Broadcast Series Law

An eight million franc credit was granted by Culture Minister Jack Lang to promote animation following the request by professionals centered around SNTPT, which became very much involved. But despite its involvement, the union was also very critical of the measures that were adopted. It seemed to make more strategic sense to them to foster the development of agreements with large consumer organizations, instead of handing out subsidies for the development of new techniques which did not give

dans ces studios, eu l'opportunité d'y faire progresser les conditions de travail qui permettaient cette créativité, et les conditions salariales qui la sanctionnaient.

Cependant, depuis la fermeture en 1977 du studio Idéfix fondé 3 ans auparavant par Uderzo et Goscinny, la situation du Cinéma d'Animation Français se caractérisait par des entreprises aux équipements peu productifs et insuffisants, et par un nombre réduit de techniciens. Comme le constatait le Syndicat dans le mémorandum qu'il remit à l'époque au Ministère de la Culture, "l'absence d'impulsion à la production entretient cette situation de faiblesse structurelle et de non-compétitivité de nos entreprises". L'industrie de l'animation se résumait donc à la difficile survie de petits studios, parmi lesquels on peut citer ceux d'Albert Champaux, de Manuel Otero (Cinematic) ou d'André Martin et Michel Boschet (Les Films Martin Boschet). Le Syndicat ne parvint jamais à s'imposer dans ces petites structures travaillant au "coup par coup", et les conditions de travail et de salaires n'y étaient pas garantis.

C'est pourquoi l'état des lieux dressé à Lyon en 1983 fut alarmant : alors même que les chaînes de télévision diffusaient de plus en plus d'heures d'animation dans les programmes pour enfants, de moins en moins de ces films étaient réalisés en France, même si certains y avaient été conçus (*Ulysse 31*, de Nina Wolmark et Bernard Deries, ou *L'aventure de la vie*, d'Albert Barille). La plupart venait du Japon ou des États Unis. La France, habituée à travailler de façon artisanale, paraissait incapable d'assumer des productions qui nécessitaient des équipes importantes, des délais serrés et des coûts de fabrication concurrentiels. Même le marché des spots publicitaires échappait aux animateurs français au profit de leurs collègues anglais.

Pourtant, si la France avait disposé des moyens nécessaires pour produire et réaliser ne serait-ce que la moitié de la production diffusée annuellement sur les trois chaînes d'alors, cela aurait déjà couvert 500 emplois en France. Constat d'autant plus désolant que l'animation, inventée par les Français Emile Reynaud et Emile Cohl, fait partie intégrante de l'identité culturelle du Cinéma Français.

La Loi des Séries

Interpellé par la profession, dont le SNTPT qui était apparu à cette occasion comme l'organisation la plus représentative d'un secteur éparpillé, Jack Lang, Ministre de la Culture, débloqua un crédit de 8 millions de francs pour le dessin animé et les nouvelles images.

any assurance of any actual production.

As they put it: "Market development will enable our companies to insure employment for our technicians and rebuild their capacity to finance their projects themselves, because they would have an assured market waiting for them."

France Animation Studio, which had been newly created, thanks to the help of the Ministry of Culture, was designed to spearhead that renewal; along with Belokapi, it decided to meet the challenge by starting production of large-scale TV series (26 x 26 or 52 x 13).

The desire of these companies to remain competitive in terms of cost, while promoting a certain "French quality" in the manner and content of the shows, soon came against the problem of finding professionals who could effectively handle industrial-style production. Other studios tried to meet the challenge and encountered the same difficulties; as they were less fortunate, they quickly disappeared (Ex Bzz that made the *Bibifoc* series, which would finally be animated in Asia).

Under the leadership of Gilbert Wolmark, France Animation hired Michel Gauthier, a graduate of IDHEC (Institute for Graduate Studies of Film, the former name of today's FEMIS [Foundation for the Study of Editing, Image and Soundtrack]) where he majored in animation. Gauthier got his initial training at the end of the 60s, on Rouxel's *Shadocks*. Between 1974 and 1984, he

produced about 40 films (short and long series), which was warmly received in cartoon and short film festivals (*Alloscopie N° 1*, *Mister Jerry and Dr. Debyll*, *Un matin ordinaire*, *La Campagne est si bell.*)

He quickly established himself as an original writer, whose artistic inspiration closely followed the path blazed by John Hubley. But it was in another aspect of his prolific career that Wolmark was mostly interested in. Within the union, Gauthier and his team had already completed an in-depth study of the animation industry, as well as on working conditions; and had tried to establish a methodology that would ensure the efficient production of TV series without sacrificing creativity. It was this initiative that led to the agreements signed with Savec and 3A. That know-how had been successfully tested with such broad-

Le Syndicat s'impliqua beaucoup dans cette relance, appelée pompeusement "Plan Image", bien que restant très critique par rapport aux mesures adoptées : plutôt que de distribuer des subventions pour de "nouvelles techniques" sans s'être assuré au préalable d'un développement programmé de la production, il nous paraissait stratégiquement prioritaire d'impulser la production nationale, notamment par un développement important des commandes des gros consommateurs institutionnels. C'est en permettant le développement du marché que nos entreprises, assurées d'un débouché, seraient amenées à s'équiper, à assurer l'emploi des techniciens, et à reconstituer leur capacité d'autofinancement.

Le studio France-Animation, nouvellement créé avec l'appui du Ministère de la Culture pour être le fer de lance de cette relance, et Belokapi relevèrent pourtant chacun de leur côté le défi en se lançant dans la fabrication de séries "lourdes" d'animation pour la télévision (26x26 ou 52x13). L'ambition de ces deux entreprises de rester dans des coûts de fabrication compétitifs tout en pro-

mouvant une certaine "qualité française", tant dans la facture que dans le contenu, se heurta immédiatement au problème du recrutement de professionnels aptes à mener à bien une fabrication de type industriel. D'autres studios tentèrent le pari et, se heurtant aux mêmes difficultés, eurent moins de chance et disparurent rapidement (Exemple : BZZ, qui devait produire la série *Bibifoc*, finalement animé en Asie)



Jean-François Languionie's *Pot'r et la fille des eaux* (*Pot'r and the Mermaid*) (1974)

France-Animation, dirigé par Gilbert Wolmark, s'adjoignit les services de Michel Gauthier. Diplômé de l'IDHEC (Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques, ancienne appellation de l'actuelle FEMIS : Fondation pour l'Étude du Montage, de l'Image et du Son.), section Animation, Michel Gauthier avait fait ses premières armes à la fin des années soixante avec l'équipe des *Shadocks* de Jacques Rouxel avant de réaliser de 1974 à 1984 une quarantaine de films commandités de plus ou moins longue durée, abondamment primés dans tous les festival d'animation ou de courts métrages (*Alloscopie N° 1* : Grand prix du Festival de Biarritz 1976, *Mister Jerry et Dr Debyll* : Prix du Film Publicitaire au Festival International d'Annecy 1979, *Un Matin ordinaire* : Prix Jean Riesser Nadal au Festival International de

cast series as *Amstram Gram* (60 minutes) or *M le Martien* (60 minutes), both Belokapi productions.

An Economic and Cultural Stake

Gauthier was involved in the founding of France Animation, directing the implementation of its structure and team that were to produce *Monde Egloutis* (26 x 26). On the other hand, under the leadership of Nicole Pichon, Belokapi hired Michel Pillys and Bernard Kessler to complete the *Robostory* series. Because they were unionized and experienced, the *Robostory* team, as opposed to the one at France Animation, refused to give in on the matter of salaries, as they felt that they had already proven that their production costs could be competitive. This debate forced Gauthier to resign, because for him the debate was more cultural than economic. But this did not prevent him from defending France Animation.

Denouncing the producers who chose to export production under the pretext that the storyboards were done in France, Gauthier stated that, "Animation, from the Latin *anima*, is an integral part of the creative process, that it was not disassociated with its conception . . . It is not something that be conceived of as a mechanical process which can be sub-contracted out."

Equally convinced that the animation was a cultural tool as important as its commercial potential, the union always fought to safeguard the artistic and technical qualities of films. They fought to get legislation passed that would put an end to the legal vacuum that still exists in that profession, but also to defend working and salaries. Many thought that the wages proposed by the union were too high and that it was an attempt to destroy the industry. "Producers would never be able to make animated cartoons in France with such high salaries."

It's a fact though that with those "high salaries," Belokapi was able to produce *Robostory*, a 52 x 13 series at FF 42,000/minute, while at the same time France Animation produced *Les Mondes Engloutis* for FF 52,000/minute, paying their technicians wages that were 50% lower.

Because of a severe shortage of highly-skilled pro-

Lille 1981, prix spécial du Festival de Grenoble 1981, 1er prix du Festival International d'Espinho, Cinnanima 1981, Grand prix du Festival International de Stuttgart 1982, *La Campagne est si belle* : 1er prix du Festival International d'Antibes, prix spécial du jury au Festival de Marly-le-Roi 1986, nommé aux Césars). Il s'était vite affirmé comme un auteur original, inscrivant sa démarche artistique dans la voie ouverte par John Hubley.

Mais c'est un autre aspect de sa carrière prolifique qui intéressa sans doute Gilbert Wolmark : Dans le cadre du syndicat, Michel Gauthier et son équipe avaient mené depuis longtemps une réflexion approfondie sur les métiers de l'animation et les conditions de travail, et tenté de mettre en place une méthodologie apte à assurer la fabrication de séries avec efficacité au plan économique, sans sacrifier pour autant l'aspect créatif. C'est cette démarche qui avait permis d'aboutir à la signature des accords d'entreprise à la Savec et aux 3A. Ce savoir-faire avait été expérimenté avec succès sur des séries telles que *Amstram Gram* (60 min) ou *M Le Martien* (60 min), deux productions Belokapi.



Michel Boschet & André Martin's *Mais où sont les nègres d'antan* (*Where Are the Blacks of Yesteryear*) (1962).

Un enjeu économique et culturel

Michel Gauthier participa donc à la fondation de France-Animation en dirigeant la mise en place de la structure et de l'équipe de réalisation des *Mondes Engloutis* (26 X 26 Mn.). Belokapi, de son côté, dirigé par Nicole Pichon, recruta Michel Pillys et Bernard Kessler pour mener à bien la série *Robostory*. Contrairement à ce qui se passa à France-Animation, l'équipe de

Robostory, forte de son expérience et majoritairement syndiquée, refusa de transiger sur les salaires, estimant avoir déjà prouvé que les coûts de fabrication pouvaient être concurrentiels avec les minima ratifiés conventionnellement. Ce différent amena Michel Gauthier, qui plaçait le débat moins sur le plan économique que culturel, à quitter le syndicat. Mais il n'en continua pas moins à défendre l'animation : dénonçant les producteurs qui choisissent de délocaliser la fabrication en expliquant que les story-board sont fait en France, Michel Gauthier répond que "l'animation, du latin Anima, est partie intégrante de la création, elle est indissociable de la conception (...).

professionals, France Animation was forced to hire and a large number of beginners (for 98% of them, it was their first job in animation). That team, nevertheless, was able to quickly gain a technical mastery that allowed it to produce 2 blocks of 26 episodes of *Les Mondes Engloutis*. The union was not able to recruit this new generation of technicians, who were not able to immediately appreciate the relationship that existed between trade practices and its economic and social context.

But awareness came with experience, as was seen with the liquidation of Belokapi, a company that Michel Gauthier and his team had finally joined, but it was too late.

The agreements fell apart, and for the next 10 years, salaries dropped to a point, in some cases, close to the minimum wage. Working conditions also deteriorated without preventing the producers from subcontracting in the name of "economic realism."

Today, that debate belongs to history. France Animation sent animation to China and the Bayard Group liquidated Belokapi. There was neither high wages nor any series to produce.

Asterix to the Rescue

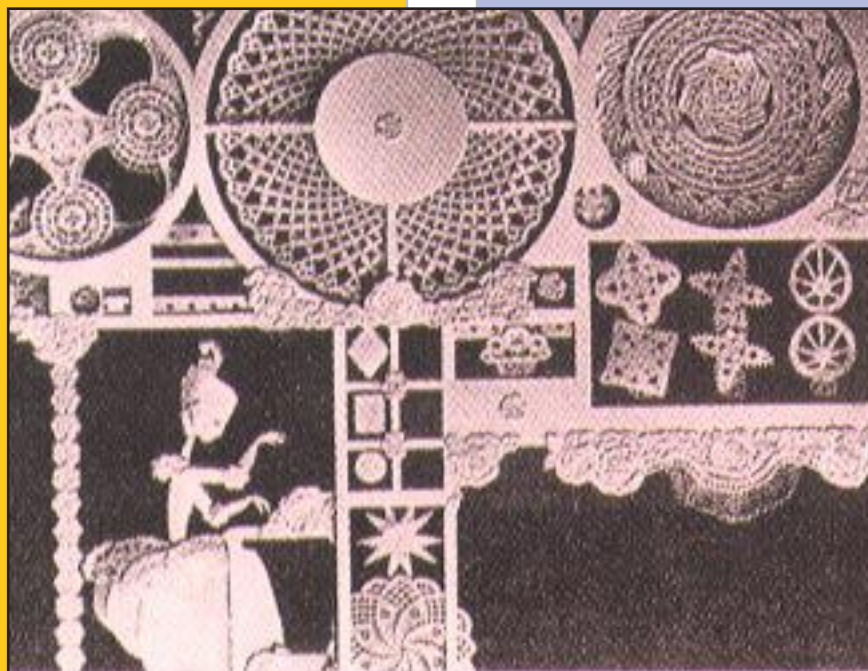
Production of animated TV series was not the only aspect of the promotion of animation. Gaumont planned the production of a feature film, to be directed by Paul and Gaëtan Buzzi inspired by Albert Uderzo and René Goscinny's *Asterix* comic books. To do this, Gaumont had to build a structure that would allow it, later on, to make two other movies with the two famous Celts. Because cartoon animation was not recognized in any bargaining agreement, the contract signed by Gaumont bore job descriptions corresponding to live-action classifications.

That situation helped a multinational team of technicians to realize this lack of recognition. Being

Cet événement rare ne peut être envisagé comme un processus mécanique et donc, être délégué".

Convaincu également que le film d'animation représentait un support culturel non moins important que ces potentialités commerciales, le Syndicat s'est toujours battu pour la sauvegarde de la qualité artistique et technique des films. Cela non seulement en réclamant une réglementation pour mettre fin au vide juridique dont souffre toujours cette profession, mais également en défendant les conditions de travail et de rémunération. Beaucoup trouvaient les salaires syndicaux "délirants" et criaient au sabotage : jamais les producteurs n'allaient pouvoir produire de l'animation en France avec de pareils salaires! Pourtant, avec ces salaires "délirants", Belokapi a produit *Robostory*, série de 52 fois 13 minutes pour un coût minute de 42 000 Fr. alors que dans le même temps, France-Animation produisait *Les Mondes engloutis* à 52 000 Fr. la minute avec des salaires de techniciens inférieurs d'environ 50%. En effet, en raison du manque dramatique de professionnels confirmés, France-Animation avait du recruter une grande partie de débutants (98% des techniciens accédaient pour la première fois à la pratique de leurs métiers).

Cette équipe parvint pourtant rapidement à un niveau technique qui lui permit de mener à bien deux séries de 26 épisodes des *Mondes Engloutis*. Cette nouvelle génération de techniciens que le syndicat ne sut pas rallier ne prit pas tout de suite la mesure du lien existant entre la pratique de ce métier et le contexte économique et social dans lequel il s'exerce. Cette prise de conscience vint avec l'expérience, et se concrétisa notamment au moment de la liquidation de Belokapi qu'avait rejoint Michel Gauthier, suivi par une partie de son équipe. Mais il était sans doute déjà trop tard. L'abandon de la défense des salaires fut fatal aux accords qui tombèrent en désuétude, et au cours des dix années qui suivirent, le niveau des rémunérations s'effondra jusqu'à atteindre un niveau proche du SMIC



Michel Ocelot's *Les trois inventeurs* (*The Three Inventors*) (1980).

s'effondra jusqu'à atteindre un niveau proche du SMIC

poorly represented amidst a diverse team, the union was not able to directly negotiate a contract with the company.

The presence, however, of Yannick Piel, Gaumont's producer on *Asterix*, in the multilateral commission for the extension of collective bargaining of film production, allowed the union to negotiate within that commission! Unfortunately, due to a reason pertaining to the commission, and which have nothing to do with animation, the extension was not ratified and remains without effect.

After the three *Asterix* films were made, and despite the company's success, Gaumont did not maintain the structure and the high quality team that made these films were dispersed, to the sorrow of the French film industry. Had Gaumont kept the team intact, which it was able to do, France would then have been equipped with the means to produce animated features in competition with the US and Japanese giants. That has not happened since the days of the Idéfix Studio.

While TV stations were broadcasting more and more animated shows for kids, fewer and fewer were made in France, despite the fact that some were conceived there.

French Animation: Let's Liquidate

The final blow to the attempt to revive French animation was, without doubt, given by the liquidation in early 1988 of Belokapi by the Bayard Group, which controlled it. The closing of a studio that was turning out five international quality series, was an eye opener to the technicians who fought for four years to live up to the challenge posed by the *Plan Image*.

Their efforts were reduced to nothing, although they had already won a challenge thought by many as impossible to meet: to establish the basis for a French animation industry of a certain level for the production of TV series, as well as for the making of quality features. Efforts that were destroyed by the cynicism and lack of cultural ambition of those in whose hands lay the destiny of the audiovisual industry.

By seriously questioning what they called the "unwise" management practices of Nicole Pichon, whom they accused of launching too many shows without securing their financing, the leaders of the

(Salaire Minimum de Croissance [actuellement : 6 431 Fr mensuels.] Salaire plancher au dessous duquel aucun salarié ne peut être payé, selon la législation française, sauf de rares exceptions.) dans certains cas. Les conditions d'emploi et de travail se dégradèrent également dans les mêmes proportions, sans que cela empêche les producteurs de retourner à leurs vieilles habitudes de sous-traitance, au nom du "réalisme économique"... Aujourd'hui, ce débat appartient à l'histoire, France Animation sous-traite l'animation en Chine, le groupe Bayard a liquidé Belokapi, il n'y a plus ni salaires "délirants", ni séries à animer...

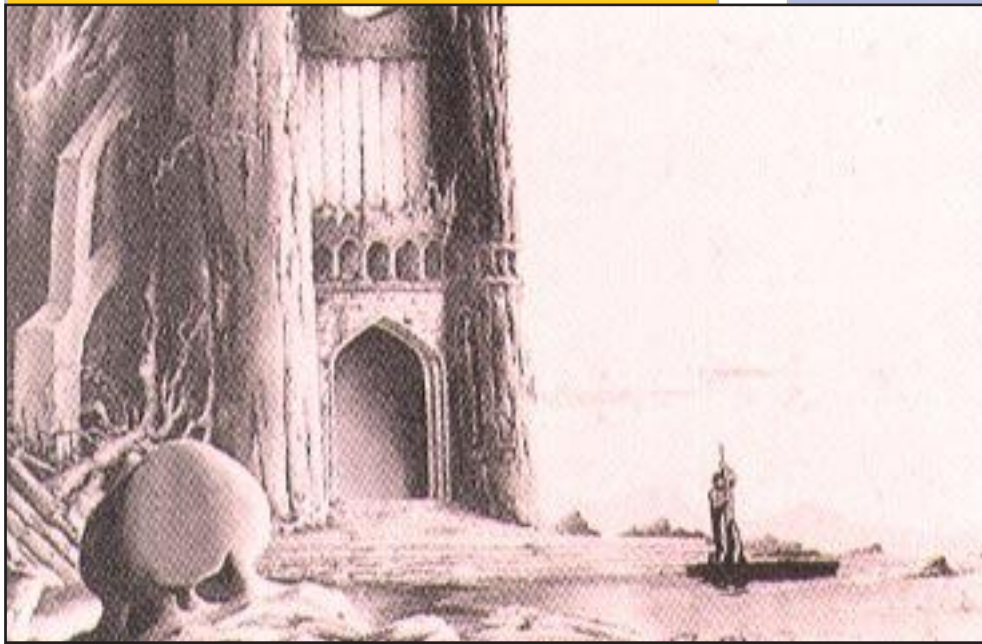
Astérix à la Rescousse !

La production de séries télé ne fut pas le seul volet de la relance du dessin animé : La Gaumont mit en chantier la fabrication d'un long-métrage, réalisé par Paul et Gaëtan Brizzi, tiré de la bande dessinée *Astérix*, d'Albert Uderzo et René Goscinny. Pour cela elle créa une structure qui lui permit ensuite de réaliser deux autres films avec les célèbres gaulois. Les fonctions de l'animation n'étant reconnues dans aucune convention collective, les contrats de la Gaumont portaient des dénominations de fonctions correspondant à des postes dans la prise de vues réelles. Cette situation fit prendre conscience à une équipe où se côtoyaient toutes les nationalités d'Europe, du manque de reconnaissance dont souffrait cette profession. Trop faiblement représenté dans cette équipe très hétéroclite, le Syndicat ne put négocier directement un accord d'entreprise. Pourtant, la présence de Yannick Piel, producteur des *Astérix*, représentant la Gaumont dans la commission mixte d'extension de la Convention Collective de la Production Cinématographique permit au Syndicat de négocier les définitions de fonction et d'obtenir en 1989 leur adoption dans le cadre de cette commission. Malheureusement, pour des raisons inhérentes à cette commission et n'ayant rien à voir avec l'animation, cette extension n'a toujours pas été ratifiée et reste donc sans effet à ce jour.

Après la réalisation des trois long-métrages d'*Astérix* et bien que le succès fut au rendez-vous, la Gaumont ne maintint pas la structure, et l'équipe de très haut niveau qui avait animé ces trois films fut dispersée, pour le plus grand dommage de la production française. Si la Gaumont avait maintenu ce studio, elle en avait les moyens, la France disposerait d'un outil de production de long-métrage, ce qui n'est plus arrivé depuis le studio Idéfix, capable de rivaliser avec les géants américains et japonais.

Press Group "in 8 days liquidated a company that existed for 20 years," Michel Gauthier said at the time, while working on *Ys la Magnifique* in the Montreuil Studio. What led us to that?

Unlike the American and Japanese networks, the fees French television pays for animated programming are very low; being only 10% to 15% of their actual budgets versus 50% to 70%. Producers thus have to come up with the rest of the financing on their own, betting on additional income from other rights, such as toys, gadgets, books, etc. Belokapi saw the downfall of its enterprise when TF1 (the



Paul & Gaëtan Brizzi's *Fracture* (1977).

French public TV network, which was privatized in 1986), under the direction of Hervé Bourges, canceled their showing of the *Robostory* episodes it had ordered because of privatization! The prospects of marketing the program's ancillary rights vanished and Belokapi was forced to return the down payments it had received from toy manufacturers and publishers. There is no protection against these types of "accidents," because TV networks have the freedom on whether they will broadcast a show they bought or not—"deprogramming" being a common practice among commercial broadcasters. TF1 had once before put Belokapi in jeopardy when production of *Robostory* was beginning by withdrawing from the financing package, although it was supposed to come up with a quarter of the budget. Nicole Pichon was then forced to make up for the balance through the banks.

At the time of Belokapi's liquidation, the management of children's programming units contend-

Le dessin animé français : on liquide...

Le coup de grâce à cette tentative de relance du dessin animé français fût sans conteste la liquidation début 1988 de Belokapi par le groupe Bayard, qui en avait pris le contrôle. Cette mise à mort d'une structure qui était en train de fabriquer cinq séries de niveau international ouvrit les yeux des techniciens qui s'étaient battus depuis quatre ans pour relever le défi du Plan Image. Alors qu'ils avaient gagné ce pari réputé impossible : établir les bases d'une production Française d'animation de niveau industriel, aussi bien

pour la production de séries télé que pour la réalisation de long-métrages de qualité, ils virent leurs efforts réduits à néant par le manque d'ambition culturelle et le cynisme de ceux qui détenaient entre leurs mains l'avenir de l'audiovisuel : Remettant en cause la gestion "imprudente" de Nicole Pichon, accusée d'avoir lancé trop de séries importantes sans s'assurer de leur financement préalable, les dirigeants du groupe de presse ont "liquidé en huit jours une entreprise qui existait depuis vingt ans", comme le soulignait Michel Gauthier, qui réalisait alors *Ys La Magnifique* dans le studio montreuillois. Comment en était-on arrivé là ?

La télévision française, à la différence des networks américains ou japonais, paie très mal le dessin animé : de 10 à 15% du budget de fabrication, alors qu'il faudrait qu'elle le finance pour 50 à 70%, comme cela se fait dans d'autres pays. Le producteur doit alors monter son financement en spéculant sur les retombées financières des droits dérivés : jouets, gadgets, livres... vendus dans la foulée de la diffusion. Belokapi a vu cette belle mécanique s'enrayer lorsque TF1 (première chaîne de télévision française, anciennement chaîne publique, privatisée en 1986 par le Gouvernement) a annulé la diffusion de *Robostory*, pourtant commandée par la Une au temps d'Hervé Bourges, pour cause de privatisation. Les espoirs de commercialisation des droits dérivés se sont envolés, et Belokapi a dû rembourser les avances consenties par les fabricants de jouets et par les éditeurs. Il n'y a guère de recours contre ce genre "d'accident", toute chaîne restant libre de ne pas diffuser ce qu'elle a payé, et les déprogrammations sont monnaie courante dans toutes les télés commerciales. La Une avait déjà mis

ed that the production and depreciation costs of French animation were still higher than those of companies in the Far East, which prompted them to cynically comment that, "the economics of lower cost also applied to the animation industry."

On average, the cost for one minute of animation was FF 50,000 in France against FF 2,000 in Japan, where the work was often subcontracted out to Korea. The teams working on *Mondes Engloutis* (FF 52,000/minute), *Robostory* (FF 42,000/minute), or *Ys tla Manigique* (FF 32,000/minute) were at odds with the declaration that, "It is wrong to say that Toei can produce an episode a day," as Michel Gauthier said in protest. At best, the schedule would be one episode per week. With Belokapi, we were able to turn out 2 a month, at a cost of FF 32,000/minute. Furthermore, the Japanese industry is 30,000 workers strong compared to 300 in France. We must also add that the arguments and figures cited by the different network heads were shameful and dishonest, because *Plan Images* objectives has never been to align with Japanese and Korean production capacities; instead, they were to build an industrial sector able, among other things, to maintain the cultural specificity of French animation. When Jacqueline Jouvert, head of programming at Antenne 2 (France's second public TV network), declared that, "I imposed a 30% quota for national animation and I intend to respect it," she just wanted to be reassuring. She also added that, "We will broadcast all the shows ordered from Belokapi." But in order for her to do so, the shows had to be finished, and this was not the case with *Ys la Manifique*, despite all the efforts put forth to save the project.

Antenne 2 did not increase its share to make up for the hole left by the withdrawal of Belokapi; and since another investor did not come up with the extra FF 8 million, the half-finished series ended up forgotten.

Animation is not something that be conceived of as a mechanical process which can be subcontracted out.

Ys la Magnifique, or the Engulfed Series

In 1985, the project, winner of the Antenne 2/Ministry of Culture contest, was the first Franco-Canadian production of international standing. Its aim was to reconnect with its European cultural her-

Belokapi en difficulté au début de la production de *Robostory*, qu'elle devait financer à hauteur du quart de son budget, en se retirant du montage alors que la série était en cours de fabrication, obligeant Nicole Pichon à trouver cette somme auprès des banques.

"Les lois économiques du moindre coût s'appliquent également au dessin animé", faisaient remarquer avec cynisme les responsables d'unités de programme pour la jeunesse au moment de la liquidation de Belokapi, en arguant que le prix de revient et d'amortissement des dessin animés français était encore largement supérieur à celui des pays d'Extrême-Orient. En moyenne 50 000F la minute contre 2 000 au Japon, où le travail est parfois sous-traité en Corée ou à Hong-Kong. Les équipes des *Mondes engloutis* (52 000 Fr la Mn), de *Robostory* (42 000 Fr la Mn) ou de *Ys la magnifique* (32 000 Fr la Mn) s'inscrivaient en faux contre ces déclarations : "Dire que la Toei peut produire un épisode par jour est faux," protestait Michel Gauthier. "La cadence est au mieux d'un par semaine. A Belokapi, nous étions arrivés à deux par mois, pour un coût de 32 000F la minute. En outre, l'industrie japonaise dispose de 30 000 salariés, contre 300 en France." Ajoutons que les arguments et comparaisons des responsables de chaînes relevaient d'une mauvaise foi éhontée : Le but du Plan Image n'avait jamais été de s'aligner sur la capacité de production du Japon ou de la Corée, mais de construire un secteur industriel apte, entre autres, à préserver la spécificité culturelle de l'animation française. Jacqueline Joubert, responsable des émissions pour la jeunesse d'Antenne 2 (Deuxième chaîne de télévision française, publique) se voulait rassurante et déclarait : "J'ai imposé un quota de 30% d'animation nationale dans mes programmes, je compte bien le respecter. Nous diffuserons les films commandés à Belokapi." Encore aurait-il fallu que ces films puissent être terminés, ce qui ne fut pas le cas de *Ys la Magnifique*, malgré les efforts déployés par l'ensemble de l'équipe pour tenter de sauver le projet. A2 n'augmenta pas son apport pour combler le trou creusé par la défection de Belokapi, et comme aucun autre investisseur ne vint apporter ces 8 MF manquants, la série pourtant à moitié animée finit aux oubliettes.

Ys la magnifique, la série engloutie

Ce projet, lauréat du Concours A2/Ministère de la Culture, est devenu en 1985 la première grande coproduction franco-canadienne d'envergure internationale. Son ambition était de renouer avec le pat-

itage (*Ys la Magnifique* was inspired by a Brittany legend) and to show that it was possible to offer original stories using quality animation, while respecting the demands of a series. At the time, that ambition was considered by many as “unrealistic, outdated and even useless,” and was widely criticized. The technicians who were working on it, union and nonunion, were blamed for betting too much on a “mediocre” series. If many fought hard for the existence of an industrial sector capable of producing animated series, it is because they considered that it was only on that foundation would it be possible to build an industry capable of turning out feature films and leave enough creative space for short auteur films. In fact, that objective was supposed to allow the creation of an economic dynamics that would trickle down the whole animation industry and pull it out of the craftsman ghetto it was kept in.

This is the case in Japan, where the numerous TV series are nothing but the ransom that we have to pay to see masterpieces like those of Takahata or Miyazaki. We did fight to end up providing mediocre animation to the public. Our fight is an attempt to build the foundation of an industry.

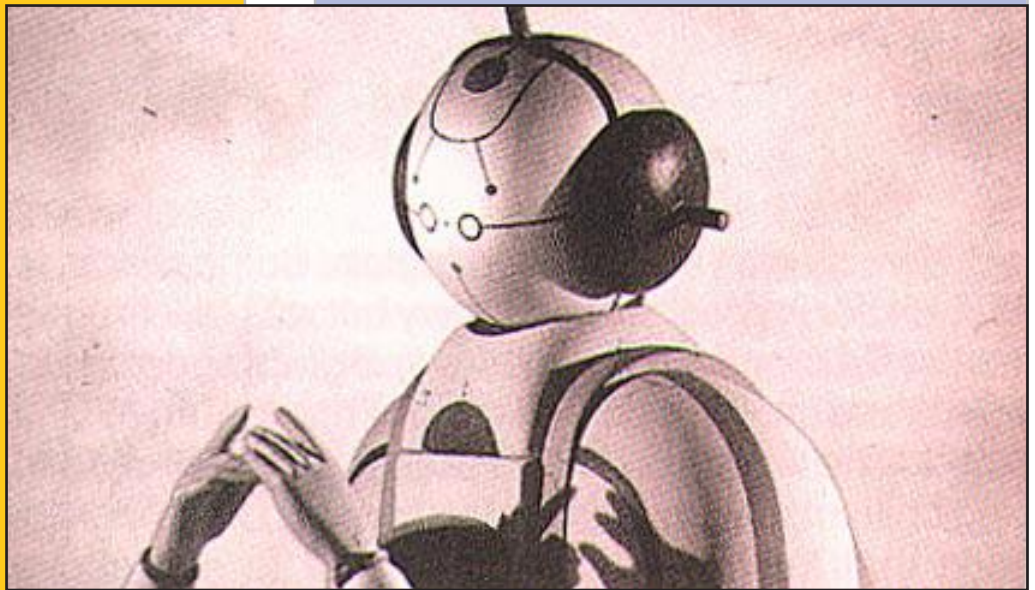
Today in France, there are no more animated series, and that is not a gain for animation in general. If no producer is ready to bet on making a series in France, it will seem impossible to expect to see feature films as well. The difficulties met by Jean Francois Laguione in the making of *Le Chateau des Singes* or Michel Ocelot with *Kirikou et la Sorcière* are a testament to that. As for the French film *La Vie est un Grand Chelm*, it was animated in Romania.

Embezzlement of Public Funds

Although the demise of French animated cartoons was also a serious failure of the government, it did not stop it from “opening the umbrella” so to speak. Two special funds were used: the support fund and the support account both served as a shield and an alibi for hiding. The reality is that those funds are being collected even as we speak, by producers who are not doing any work on in France except for storyboards, graphic research and the model

rimoine culturel européen (*Ys la Magnifique* s'inspire d'une légende bretonne), et de montrer qu'on peut servir des histoires originales par une animation de qualité tout en respectant les contraintes de la série.

A l'époque, cette ambition était considérée par beaucoup comme “irréaliste, dépassé, voir même inutile”. Ce combat a été abondamment dénigré. On a reproché au techniciens qui le menaient, dans le Syndicat ou en marge de celui-ci, de tout miser sur les séries, considéré comme des produits “médiocres”. Si certains se sont beaucoup battus pour qu'existe un secteur industriel de l'animation de série, c'est parce qu'ils considéraient que c'était sur cette assise que pouvait se construire une industrie du long métrage, mais aussi un espace de création pour le court métrage d'auteur. En effet, cet objectif devait permettre de créer une dynamique économique propre à



Piotr Kamler's *Une mission éphémère* (A Short-Life Mission) (1992).

rejaillir sur l'ensemble des productions d'animation et sortir l'animation du ghetto de l'artisanat. C'est le cas au Japon, où les innombrables séries dont la télé nous a abreuvés sont la rançon pour les chef-d'oeuvre d'un Takahata ou d'un Miyazaki. Nous ne nous sommes pas battus pour imposer de l'animation “médiocre”, nous nous sommes battus pour tenter de construire les bases d'une industrie.

Aujourd'hui, pratiquement plus aucune série n'est animée en France, et l'animation en général n'y a rien gagné : Si plus aucun producteur de séries ne fait le pari de fabriquer en France, il semble tout aussi impossible de réaliser un long-métrage en France, si l'on en croit les difficultés rencontrées par Jean-François Laguionie (*Le château des Singes*) ou Michel Ocelot (*Kirikou et la Sorcière*). Quant au film français *La Vie est un Grand Chelm*, d'Albert Kaminski, il a été animé

sheets—enough to keep 10 persons busy. The real work is sent off to Korea or Taiwan, only to come back for postproduction (sound, editing, etc.). It is clear that public funds are subsidizing jobs for Koreans and Taiwanese.

TV networks don't play their role either. Instead of promoting a national production that will create its own market, which is the indispensable basis for the existence of an industry that would help create French cultural expression, the networks limit themselves to filling their schedules with cheap product.

Unlike the American and Japanese networks, the fees French television pays for animated programming are very low; being only 10% to 15% of their actual budgets versus 50% to 70%.

The failure of *Plan Image* is not to be found only at the level of competition between the economic superpowers, which has more than adverse social effects; it is also a failure on the cultural front. The networks and the large organizations responsible for the future of audiovisuals bear a heavy responsibility for this failure.

Mickey to the Rescue of French Animation, or the Other Way Around

Today, animation is experiencing a promising worldwide renewal. Gaumont has decided to come back for the *Dupuis* series after the success of *Spirou*. Gaumont continues to mine this Franco-Belgian animation heritage. A number of series are under way. Very few or none will be made in France. The fight is already lost. The battle for better working conditions must be fought endlessly. The members of SNTPT are there to fight it, despite the setbacks and difficulties, wherever they may be. Especially in the Walt Disney Feature Animation studio in France—the only studio that can claim to have the largest team of European animators, which also has the capacity to produce animated features without subcontracting work out.

Ironically enough, that same studio made an important contribution to the adaptation of a masterpiece of French cultural heritage: Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. It may seem pitiful that not one French producer was able to acquire the nec-

en Hongrie, co-production oblige.

Le détournement des fonds publics

Bien que la liquidation du dessin animé français fut un grave échec aussi pour les pouvoirs publics, le gouvernement, "ouvrit le parapluie" : le fond de soutien et le compte de soutien furent les deux dossiers alibi derrière lesquels l'Etat s'abrita. En réalité, ces aides sont encore aujourd'hui raflées par des producteurs qui ne fabriquent pas sur le territoire : A part le storyboard, les recherches graphique et les model sheets – du travail pour une dizaine de personnes – l'ouvrage s'en va très vite en Corée ou à Taïwan, et ne revient que pour la sonorisation et le mixage, c'est à dire la signature. Ainsi les fonds publics vont finalement à la production étrangère et subventionnent l'emploi des Coréens ou des Taïwanais.

Les chaînes de télé, de leur côté, n'assument pas leur rôle : favoriser une production nationale pour contribuer à créer leur propre marché, base indispensable à l'existence d'une industrie, et permettre l'expression culturelle de la France. Elles se contentent de remplir des grilles de programme avec des produits bon marché.

L'échec du Plan Image ne se situa donc pas seulement sur le champs de la bataille mondiale que se livrent les grandes puissances sur le plan économique, il n'eut pas seulement des répercussions sociales dommageables, ce fut bien une défaite sur le plan culturel. Les chaînes de télé et les grands groupes qui détiennent les destinées de l'audiovisuel entre leurs mains portent la lourde responsabilité de cette échec.

Mickey a la Rescousse du Dessin Animé Français, ou le Contraire...

Aujourd'hui, le dessin animé connaît un renouveau prometteur dans le monde : aussi la Gaumont revient-elle à la série, *Dupuis*, après le succès de *Spirou*, continue l'adaptation du patrimoine de la B.D. franco-belge, plusieurs séries sont en chantier. Très peu, voire même aucune ne sera animée en France, ce combat là est perdu. La bataille pour les conditions de travail est sans cesse à recommencer. Les militants du SNTPT sont toujours là pour la mener, malgré les revers et les difficultés, partout où ils sont.

Notamment dans le studio de dessin animé français qui réunit la plus grosse équipe d'animateurs européens, le seul qui ait la capacité de produire des long-métrages sans sous-traiter, Walt Disney Feature Animation France. Ironie du sort, ce studio vient d'apporter une contribution décisive à l'adaptation en ani-

essary means to tap into that heritage and instead watch it pillaged by major American corporations. Of course, one may argue that Disney's studio, based in Montreuil, on the outskirts of Paris, is a French studio with a French and European crew, and is proud of its specificity.

In 1990, the union created as a section of SNT-PCT in Disney and was able to acquire an audience well beyond the limits of the company. That audience is expressed not only in the number of members, but also in the fact that its people on the Board of Personnel are regularly elected by large margins. They were not only able to recapture its credibility among the new generation of technicians, but it was also able to present itself to management as a major interlocutor. It then became possible to see that many agreements were signed and, in particular, a minimum wage agreement, which stands as a reference point in the industry, since the termination of the agreements prior to *Plan Image*.

We are certainly far from being a full-fledged industrial sector, with large studios turning out quality productions promoting France's cultural heritage. And we are far from full employment for the industry's technicians—layout artists, animators and designers—things that were promised or hoped for with *Plan Image*. Yes, we are far from having a strong union presence in all the major companies, able to compel negotiations for our claims. And we remain far from having contracts guaranteeing basic hiring and working conditions. Despite all that, the presence of Disney in France must be viewed as a plus, not only for French animation, but for the union as well. It is only by multiplying contacts with unions in other countries, by trying to broaden its audience beyond national boundaries, by being present inside the most famous animation studio of them all that the union will be able to continue the fight that will allow the singular little voice of French animation to be heard.

—Translated from the French by Bassirou Thioune

Jean-Luc Ballester is a representative of and Editor of the newsletter for the Animation Department of the SNT-PCT in Paris.

mation d'un chef d'oeuvre du patrimoine culturel français : *Notre Dame de Paris*, de Victor Hugo. On peut trouver désolant qu'aucun producteur français ne se soit donné les moyens de puiser dans ce patrimoine et qu'il soit exploité, pillé diront certains, par les Majors compagnies américaines. On peut aussi considérer que, justement, le studio Disney, basé à Montreuil, en banlieue parisienne, est un studio français, réunissant une équipe française et européenne unie et fière de sa spécificité.

Créée en 1990 en son sein, la section syndicale du SNT-PCT a su redonner à ce syndicat une audience qui dépasse les limites de l'entreprise. En effet, celle-ci ne s'exprime pas seulement dans le nombre des adhésions, mais également dans le fait que les candidats présentés par le Syndicat aux élections des institutions de représentation du personnel sont régulièrement élus à une large majorité. Non seulement le Syndicat a su retrouver auprès des nouvelles générations de techniciens une crédibilité qu'il avait perdue, mais il a su également s'imposer auprès de la Direction comme un interlocuteur incontournable. C'est ainsi que plusieurs accords ont pu être ratifiés, notamment un accord de salaires minima garantis qui fait déjà référence dans la profession, le premier depuis l'abandon des accords antérieurs au *Plan Image*. On est peut-être loin du secteur industriel où plusieurs grosses structures fabriqueraient des séries de qualité, mettant en valeur le patrimoine culturel français, loin du plein emploi pour les techniciens de l'animation, les lay-out men, animateur et autres décorateurs. Toutes choses qu'avait promis ou laissé entrevoir le *Plan Image*. On est loin du Syndicat présent dans toutes les grandes entreprises, imposant la négociation de ses revendications, loin des conditions d'embauche et de travail garanties conventionnellement. Pourtant, la présence de Disney en France peut être un atout non seulement pour le dessin animé français, mais également pour le Syndicat. Car c'est aussi en multipliant les contacts avec les syndicats des autres pays, en cherchant à élargir son audience au-delà des frontières et en étant présent au sein du plus grand et du plus célèbre studio de Dessin Animé que le Syndicat pourra continuer à se battre pour faire entendre la petite voix singulière du dessin animé français.

Jean-Luc Ballester est le représentant et éditeur de l'"Animation", journal du secteur animation du SNT-PCT.

The Changing Winds of Korean Animation

by Chung-bae Park

In December, South Korea, known as the "Miracle on the Han River" and a major automobile and semiconductor exporter, joined the OECD. Today, however, the most important topic of conversation concerns the future of Korea's entertainment industry. And animation is the center of that industry. Nineteen ninety-five will be remembered as a turning point for Korean animation: it was the year when the world's second channel devoted exclusively to animation was established and when Korea first played host to the Seoul International Cartoon & Animation Festival (SICAF). These events took place against a background of the increased production of animated features, all of which signaled the start of a new phase in Korea's animation industry.

From Subcontracting to Planning

Korean animation nominally began with a commercial for Lucky Toothpaste in 1956. But, it is usually agreed that it really began with the production of *Hong Gil Dong* (1967), the country's first

animated feature by Shin Dong Woo of the Shin Dong Hyun brothers (Korea's answer to Walt and Roy Disney). The film's success sparked public interest in Korean animation. Though after one more film, the Shin brothers' success ended due to a dispute with their distributor. In the early 1970s, the market for

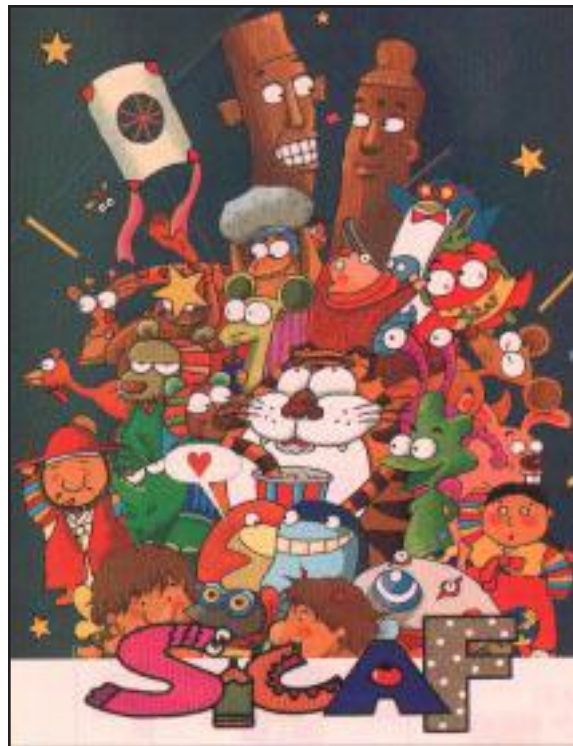
Korea, but local broadcast outlets could not afford to make such shows themselves. As a result, Korea became subordinate to the American and Japanese oligopoly.

A Decade of Subcontracting

The 1970s was the decade of subcontracting. Korean animators, because of their low wages and high skills, were in high demand by American and Japanese producers. While subcontracting greatly expanded the Korean animation industry, it also gave it a bad name, as it seemed to demonstrate a lack of creativity and planning.

Before the 1988 Seoul Olympics, as a result of cultural reform, there arose a demand for domestically made animated TV series. The demand was finally met when Korea's two major broadcasting stations, KBS and MBC, showed the first locally-made animated series: *Wandering Gga Chi* and *Go On Running Hodori*. The following year, *Wonder Kiddy 2020* sparked interest on the international scene.

While both subcontracting and domestic production continued to coexist after 1988, some studios began to enter into co-production deals with Japanese and American companies, enabling Korea to begin entering the international animation market. Disney's success in 1992, spurred a revival the follow-



Official poster for the Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival (SICAF).

Korean animation rapidly shrank as the country was flooded with foreign animated films and TV shows.

Korea's animation industry acquired the unique distinction of being dominated by feature films. Most American and Japanese TV series were being animated in

Korea's animation industry acquired the unique distinction of being dominated by feature films.

ing year of local animated features for the first time in seven years.

What Inspired These Changes?

The first factor in changing Korea's animation industry was that the country's major industrial companies changed their attitude about investing for the 21st century. With the worldwide entertainment industry expected to become highly profitable, they became eager to enter the field, which of course included animation!

Jeiljedang invested in DreamWorks SKG and began to produce animation through JCOM. The Dong Yang Group established the Tooniverse cable channel, while such industrial giants as Samsung, Hyundai, and DaeWoo are also entering the fray.

Second, there were changes in the structure of the animation industry itself. During the 1970s and 1980s, Korea had been relied on as a source of cheap labor. When its work force became more expensive and Korea started to shun low tech industries, it started to lose subcontracting work to Southeast Asia and China. It is a situation that threatens the livelihood of the some 20,000 people employed at 450 studios. These workers, along with the major industrial companies, provided the basis for a transition from

subcontracting to indigenous production. This resulted in development and planning departments being set up in the larger studios.

Third, changes occurred because of the new expectations engendered by the success of Disney animated features and the global spread of Japanese animation. Disney's success, in particular, allowed Korea to dream of animation as being a viable industry in the same league as automobiles and semiconductors. And it was the success of nearby Japan's animation industry that supported that dream.



View outside of theater at SICAF.

From the Edges Towards the Center

These structural changes resulted in many changes in the Korean animation industry itself. Nineteen ninety-five, the first year of planned animation, proved to be the turning point. The most important change, though, was the birth of the Dong Yang Groups Tooniverse. (Until then, Dong Yang had been a leading confectionery and finance company.) The laws governing Korean cable television demanded that 30% of programming be locally made, a mandate that was easily fulfilled by animation. As a result, along with co-ventures in such related industries as cartoons and

games, the animation market started to take off.

Another important change was the increase in the production of in-house productions and the continuing challenge of making feature-length films. The number of animated features increased steadily (one each in 1993 and 1994, and three in both 1995 and 1996), as did the number of TV shows (five to six new series a year between 1994 and 1996). However, with the exception of *Little Dinosaur Dooly* in December 1996, most indigenous animated productions have not been successful. This shows that, despite Korea's demonstrated technical proficiency in animation, its productions lack the creativity characteristic of Korean cultural products.

While subcontracting greatly expanded the Korean animation industry, it also gave it a bad name, as it seemed to demonstrate a lack of creativity and planning.

For 1997, it is expected that the development and production of original material will provide new opportunities to incorporate Korean styles, characters and plots, resulting in films of the same quality as *Dooly*. Korean animation is ready to compete in the international marketplace through original TV series and international co-productions.

As to computer animation, Korea, which was once a desert,



Armageddon (1995).



Poster for 1995 version of Shim brothers' *Hong Gil Dong*.

has made significant progress, which started with *Wa Bull* in 1991. The progress eventually resulted in having films entered into competition at last year's Hiroshima Animation Festival; in addition, this technology is now being used in movies, commercials and other areas of film and television.

The laws governing Korean cable television demanded that 30% of programming be locally made, a mandate that was easily fulfilled by animation.

Due to the animation boom, a number of animation schools were established. Thus, the number of animation courses has increased



1995 version of Shim brothers' *Hong Gil Dong*.



from only one prior to 1995, to four in 1995, and eight last year. These well-educated directors, animators and planners will ensure that the expansion of the local industry will not be short-lived and as such will provide the most powerful force in Korean animation.

Recent developments in animation parallel the country's industrial policy, which is noted for government working hand-in-hand with the private sector. The most impressive example of this collaboration was SICAF, where attendance was over 300,000, once again illustrating the great interest in locally-made product. The Korean government also sees animation as the most competitive industry for the 21st century. To demonstrate their confidence, it has provided tax breaks by changing animation's industrial classification and providing services to producers—two changes which clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to the field.

Despite all the changes and progress made by Korea's animation industry, it continues to remain on the periphery of the international subcontracting system. The winds of change are blowing, but nobody knows whether they will turn into a typhoon or simply fade away. Some speculate that the future of Korean animation is not bright, because of the industry's inability to plan, investors who demand immediate results, and the overwhelming

power of Disney and Japanese companies.

However, with substantial investment from the country's industrial giants, the increased interest by the public, and a new cadre of highly trained animation artists, the Korean animation industry now has the potential to change.

Animation in Korea can perhaps best be compared to country's shoe industry. During the 1970s and 1980s, Korean labor was a vital factor in subcontract shoemaking, a role now assumed by China and Southeast Asia. Recently, a slogan used by a local shoe manufacturer



Dinosaur Dooly (1996).

gained considerable popularity: "To conquer or be conquered." This motto perfectly expresses the critical situation of today's Korean animation industry.

Chung-Bae Park is Vice President of MICOM, in Korea, and whose book, Animation Story, was published last year. An experienced animation producer, he was until recently President of Seiyong Anitel.

Shin Dong Mun, An Old Warrior in Korean Animation

by John A. Lent

One of the well kept secrets of the animation world is the role played by South Korea, both in the production of foreign films and television shows and in the dynamic transformation of its sluggish domestic industry. In just 30 years, Korea has become

the world's largest animation producer, its 80 to 100 studios churning out up to 1,000 works yearly for US, Canadian, Japanese, and European clients.

Even more impressive are the strides made to develop local cartoons, mostly since 1994.

Discovering that 98% of all exportable visual products from Korea were animation, the government acted quickly to exploit this resource. In less than two years, it granted the industry manufacturing status, affording a 20% tax break; established an annual Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival (SICAF), contests to encourage the creation of local cartoon characters and animation, and annual prizes for the best animation; promoted co-production efforts; spurred the creation of at least nine university and college training programs in animation and cartoon

arts, and set in motion plans for a comics/animation museum and an animation town.

Some results of this activity include the production of at least a half dozen feature-length films, the establishment of a television cartoon network, the binding together of the desperate animators into a professional organization, and the publication of a quarterly animation journal.

Observing this phenomenal growth with more than a bit of nostalgia and wonderment has been the acknowledged father of Korean animation, Shin Dong Mun. Punctuating his reminiscences with the question, "You ever hear such a miserable story of animation?," Shin delights in telling how the industry grew from three people (himself, his wife, and his brother Shin Dong Woo) to thousands of employees, from one makeshift studio to about 100, and from hand-made equipment to computer technology.

Born in 1927, in what is now North Korea, Shin has lived a life of a movie script. His early interests in science and art were combined as he pursued the study of architecture, a subject which he soon



Poster from Shin's second feature, *Moppee & Chadolbawee*. Courtesy of Chung-bae Park.

realized was not to his liking. He dropped out of the university at the beginning of the Korean War, and during the ensuing conflict, was a prisoner of both the North Koreans and the Americans.

Discovering that 98% of all exportable visual products from Korea were animation, the government acted quickly to exploit this resource.

Improvisations

Shin broke into animation with no knowledge of the field, but armed with dogged determination. His first work was a commercial for a Korean rice wine company, completed at the time of the historical student uprisings in early 1960. For the next six years, Shin continued to produce animated commercials, until in 1966, he and a few friends embarked on making Korea's first full-length feature, *Mong Gil Dong*. Based on a comic book story by Shin's younger brother, Shin Dong Woo, *Mong Gil Dong* was an immediate success. The number of people who saw it in Seoul during the first two weeks totaled more than 200,000. Shin remembered police controlling traffic in front of the theaters, there being so many ticket holders.

Getting a film like this (70 to 80 minutes, more than 125,000 cels) into production took unimaginable patience and ingenuity. The problems seemed almost endless. For starters, there was the weather. The rainy season played havoc with cels, which stuck together and were damaged. Then there was the lack of training and expertise of the small staff, which necessitated repeating work; as Shin

said, "We would make 10 minutes of animation, not like it, throw it away, and do it again and again until we got it right." Improvisation dominated production as Shin applied knowledge he picked up through his many hobbies, one of which is astronomy. He explained: "As for special effects, I taught myself. One of my many hobbies is astronomy. I applied techniques used by astronomers to get the double exposure effect. We improvised everything, even the way to get shadow effect through the concept of accumulation of light."

Finally, Shin and his crew faced the problem of obtaining equipment and supplies. "We had no color, no cels," he said, "and we could not import from Japan as there were restrictions." The result was that scavenging was added to Shin's many duties as an animator. When the US Air Force threw away expired wide film used in air surveillance, he was there to retrieve it. The film was erased with chemicals to make it transparent. When he could not obtain the use of the animation camera at the US Eighth Army base, Shin sent his cameraman there to measure the stand and then duplicate it. The two of them designed a hand-made camera.

Disappointments & Happy Times

Immediately after the release of *Mong Gil Dong*, Shin began work on a second feature, *Moppee & Chadolbawee*, a mixture of the fiction of Shin and his brother. The six-month production was shown in August 1967. Shin used lip synchronization in the cartoon, the know-how for which he gleamed from his life-long interest in music.

Like so many of his works,



Story sketches for Shin's first feature, *Mong Gil Dong*.

Moppee & Chadolbawee cost Shin financially. "I made a financial failure and the movie production people were disappointed with me," he said. A devotee and imitator (down to wearing a beret) of Osamu Tezuka, Shin likes to point out that Japan's premier cartoonist also lost money on his animation. "Mine is a sad story," he said; "I lost big money as I don't have business ability. I'm suitable to be an artist, not a business tycoon like some of my juniors." Among the latter he referred to are Jung Wook and Nelson Shin, both of whom went on to head major studios after working with Shin in the 1960s.

From 1974-80, Shin headed Universal Art Company, which working as a subcontractor for both Japanese and American animation houses. The company went bankrupt, mainly because "my junior partner was a swindler," Shin said. Disenchanted, he quit Korean animation in what he described as the "epochal year of



Dong-Hun Shin at SICAF, 1995.

1980." For three years, he traveled, first settling in Toronto for half a year, where he worked as a layout artist at Nelvana. After that, he became somewhat of a free spirit, journeying for two years from "Texas to Alaska." He painted landscapes, primarily of the 22 US national parks he visited; the works were sold to Korean Americans for traveling money and "some to send home to my wife."

"We would make 10 minutes of animation, not like it, throw it away, and do it again and again until we got it right."

Returning to Seoul, Shin was appointed honorary chairman of Dai Won Animation Company in 1983, where he helped with the feature, *Dokko Tao* (1983). That same year, Munwha Broadcasting Company commissioned Dai Won to produce a daily animation series for children. Dai Won's head, Jung Wook, one of Shin's assistants earlier, gave him the assignment to do independently under his Shin Dong Mun Production Company.

Shin said this was his "happiest time," as he produced the series single-handedly ("I did not employ any assistants") until 1992.

Shin's last work in animation was making titles for *Ninja Turtles* in 1993. Paraphrasing General Douglas MacArthur, he said that, like old soldiers, he is just fading away from animation. He spends his time now creating paintings and illustrations of musicians and listening to the more than 4,300 disks he has collected. "I don't want to do risky work like animation again," he said.

John A. Lent is on the faculty of Temple University, in Philadelphia. He is also the editor of Asian Cinema, the journal of the Asian Cinema Studies Society, which he also chairs.

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Staying Ahead of the Game

by Jerry Hibbert



Jerry Hibbert.

Britain is now generally considered to be one of the countries at the forefront of the animation explosion. Our home grown talent is in great demand overseas, and our ability to keep one step ahead of the new technology boom is well known. Few animators now regard technological growth with suspicion, or as a threat to their traditional skills, but rather the complementary tool it actually is.

The most common mistake I see, is the use of computers in place of a good idea or as a substitute for poor draughtsmanship. The purest filmmaker's skills (be they for a 30 second TV commercial or a one-and-a-half-hour feature) will always be the most important. The ability to create images, the art of characterization, the scriptwriting, all of these skills come way ahead of technique. Yet computers, and the inevitable avalanche of new technology now available to studios, should be viewed with discerning enthusiasm!

In the 14 years Hibbert Ralph Animation (HRA) has been operating, I believe that the changes in the animation industry have been greater than at any other time. In order to maintain our position as one of London's leading studios, we have had to keep our eyes firmly on the horizon as well as on the job in hand.

Embracing New Ideas

As a studio, we made an early decision to try and embrace new ideas and explore new directions in an attempt to keep us on our toes, creatively, and to allow us to compete successfully in an ever changing market. I hope, that by taking you through our

company history, I will be able to show how we have evolved, grown and branched out into new areas as and when the time seemed right. These changes have varied from hiring a new director, to exploiting the opportunities offered by the Internet.

We are, primarily, a commercials production company, having produced over 1300 spots for companies ranging from large multinationals to small specialized companies and charities. We have also directed music videos for artists like Queen and Fleetwood Mac, and television title sequences for the UK's Independent Network and the BBC.

My partner, Graham Ralph and I joined forces in 1983. In an early attempt to buck tradition, we invited maverick designer Pat Gavin to join us as third director. His inclu-



Title sequence for *South Bank Show No. 6* (London Weekend Television), directed by Pat Gavin.



Dale Farms *Bring Me Sunshine* spot, directed by Graham Ralph.

sion was considered to be a radical step at the time, as Pat is not an animator in the purest sense, but his love of animation, combined with his formidable design and film skills meant that he was able to add a completely new dimension to our fledgling studio.

In the early years, we concentrated on commercials and TV title sequences, including many award-winners for London Weekend Television's arts flagship *The South Bank Show*.

As our reputation grew, naturally enough, our workload increased and by 1989 the need for another director became of paramount importance. Luckily we didn't have to look far, as one of our star animators, Kim Burdon, was the obvious choice. He has gone on to produce some of our most memorable commercials, adding to the awards cabinet in the process! The studio does not consider itself to have a house style—we have concentrated on being flexible and experimental and avoided the pigeonholing by clients that can so often hinder a studio's growth.

By this stage, Graham was experiencing commercials overload! He had directed hundreds of commercials over the previous 6 years,

won over 40 commendations from around the world, and had moved to our own large premises in London's Soho.

Graham in particular felt the need for fresh challenges and an entertainments division seemed to offer the opportunities that he felt would creatively refresh him. So in 1989, we launched Hibbert Ralph Entertainment (HRE)

with Graham at the helm.

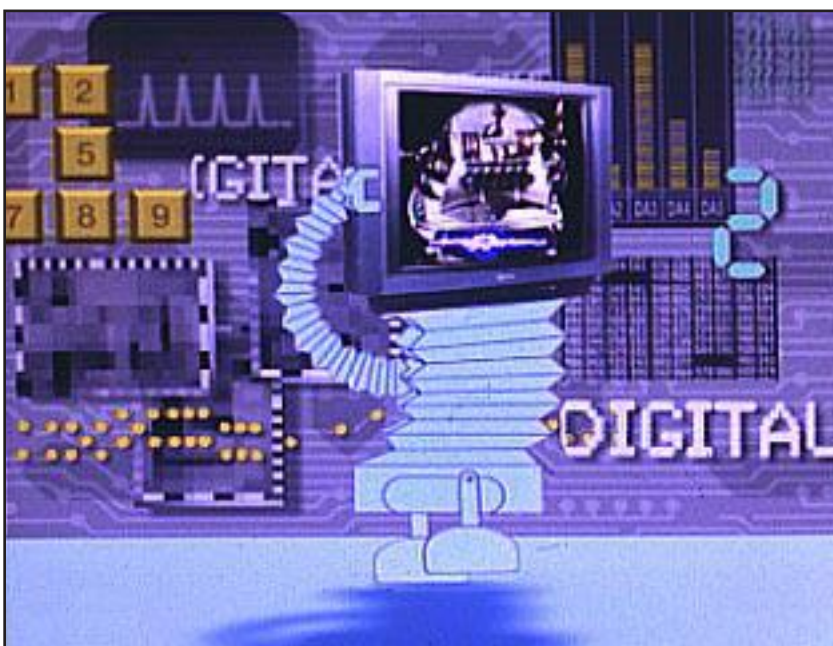
The new company's aim was to produce television programs with the same professional approach and adherence to quality already established within HRA. Placing the emphasis on strong narrative structure and designing simple, but charming characters and backgrounds, Graham managed to surmount the first and most pressing problem, that of having to adjust to the far smaller budgets of the entertainment world!

His first project, a charming children's series called *Spider!*, was snapped up by the BBC almost immediately. It aired in 1991 and has been sold throughout the world, winning prizes at The Chicago Children's Film Festival, as

well as being in competition at festivals in Annecy, Berlin and Adelaide. Graham followed this with a complete change of style, producing a half-hour version of Wagner's *Rhinegold*, which was shown on BBC Television in 1994 as part of the *Operavox* series.

Speeding Up the Production Process

By this stage, in an attempt to speed up the production process and to allow us greater flexibility *before* entering an edit suite, we became one of the first companies to invest in an Animo system. This is a software package tailored to the needs of animation studios. It runs on a network of high-performance PCs and, starting with layout designs, original animation drawings and backgrounds, the system provides numerous production tools to produce high quality digital ani-



Toshiba *Ni-Cam* spot, directed by Jerry Hibbert.

mation direct to disc, videotape or 35mm film. In essence, we use it as a flexible paint, trace and compositing package, as it can scan drawings; create color character models; digitally paint and recolor

sequences and combine all this with other media such as live-action or 3D animation sequences.

Graham gave it its first real test, employing it for the opening title sequence on *Rhinegold* and various short sequences within the film itself. It showed great potential from the outset, but was slower and less flexible than we had initially hoped. Now, three years on and several updates later, it has shed its teething troubles and has become fast and reliable. We now use it regularly for its paint, trace and inbetweening capabilities and, ultimately, it will be of enormous benefit to both HRA and HRE, but especially HRE, if the entertainments side take on more series work in the future.

After *Rhinegold*, HRE was commissioned by BBC to produce a series entitled *William's Wish Wellingtons*, which has become something of a children's classic in the UK. They are now at the planning stages for a third series. The second, meanwhile, has aired in the US, within Children Television Workshops *Big Bag* program and is currently airing on BBC television in the UK.

The studio does not consider itself to have a house style—we have concentrated on being flexible and experimental and avoided the pigeonholing by clients that can so often hinder a studio's growth.

Their most recent, and most ambitious project is a half hour special entitled *The Forgotten Toys*. Featuring the voices of Bob Hoskins and Joanna Lumley, it was shown on the UK's ITV (Independent) network on December 26, 1995. It was recently awarded the UNICEF Jury and Children's Jury prizes for Best

Short Film at The Berlin Film Festival. It also went on to be honored at the Amalfi Animation Festival, the Chicago Children's Film Festival and the Zlin International Film Festival for Children and Youth in the Czech Republic.



The Forgotten Toys (Meridian Broadcasting), directed by Graham Ralph.

A series of *The Forgotten Toys* is now in production and due to air in the autumn of this year. The team is also busy developing a new half-hour special entitled *The First Snow of Winter*, which they hope to have in production later this year.

The Next Logical Step

One of the greatest changes we have chosen to undertake, has been the setting up of a 3D department. After the computerization of the 2D paint and trace process with Animo, the next logical step was to gear the studio up to tackle 3D work. We began researching this possibility 3 years ago and eventually, 18 months later, our New Technology Unit opened its doors.

This was considered to be a radical step for a British studio, not least

because in London, production companies and facility houses are generally regarded as two totally different organizations. Hibbert Ralph was seen to be redefining the accepted definition of a British production company. In reality, we saw it as a simple extension to the traditional drawn animation skills we already possess.

Most UK production companies are reliant on facility houses to supply 3D computer work, which is budgeted and subject to inevitable time constraints. Although we still have strong working relationships with most of London's facility houses, this new setup has enabled our traditionally trained artists, animators and directors, to have personal access to the equipment, which has allowed us all far greater freedom to experiment and break new ground.

To take control of the new department and help channel all this creative energy, we employed Natalie Zita, a former award-winner with London facility The FrameStore, to act as Head of 3D. Natalie was closely involved in setting up the unit and was attracted to the new department because she felt that it would encourage original work, particularly at the heart of the animator's craft: characterization.

Eighteen months later, and with a staff of 12, the New Technology Unit has certainly proved itself. As well as meeting all our creative expectations, it has enabled us when necessary to offer agency producers more flexibility with costs and scheduling, all of which adds up to quite an attractive prospect for our



Toshiba London/New York spot, directed by Jerry Hibbert.

clients.

We have produced in-house some notable commercials, including two for Toshiba laptop computers entitled *London/New York* and *Town and Country* through Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters (London), and several US commercials, including *Holiday Celebration* for FTD through Grey (New York) and *Maze and Open Door* for American Airlines through DDB Needham (Dallas).

In 1995, we hired two new directors, bringing our total to six. Caron Creed and Andrew Painter had both worked at Richard Williams' studio, amongst others, and had been offered positions at three of the major US studios. We were extremely pleased that they chose to join us, and they have contributed hugely to our success over the last 18 months.

With so much new expertise in house and following on from our recent successes in the US, it seemed logical to investigate the opportunities offered to

us by the Internet. We have Set up our web site and continually work to improve it.

Like everyone else, we intend to use it to advertise ourselves and to allow people to "visit" our studio to view some of our past work. Where we feel we can most benefit, is by utilizing a video web conference system made available to us by 2GL Systems Interactive. This package streams video animation—still in production—through a web conference page contained in the commissioning client's secure project folder. The client can view their com-

missioned animation stage-by-stage during its development, and can view our comments at any time, anywhere, provided they have a Web browser, a Hibbert Ralph password and a connection to the Internet, and remain confident that their work cannot be seen by others.

This extraordinary leap forward for the communications industry will allow us to service clients on the other side of the world, as if they were a mere street away. Even the most hands-on creative will feel 100% involved at every stage of the decision making process.

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Although technical changes have provided opportunities not previously considered possible, the traditional skills have never been more important than they are now. But with a little help from our digital friends, the sky is truly the limit. In the words of the immortal Buzz Lightyear, "To infinity and beyond!"



Hershey's Sleigh Ride spot, directed by Jerry Hibbert.

Jerry Hibbert is Director of Hibbert Ralph Animation and Chairman of The Guild of British Animation.



Animation in Singapore

by Gigi Hu

It is often said that the Singapore economy is run by a paternalistic government,, which has been in power since 1965. Foreign media often associate the Island's economy with the tag name "Singapore Inc." Singapore Inc. or not, there have been salient changes in the broadcasting sector since the early 1990s. Amidst lawsuits and warnings against foreign press interference in the domestic politics of Singapore, the government was not shy about stating its objective to develop the island city as "an information and media hub." These developments were crystallized at the recent MIP Asia Exhibition held in Hong Kong, a premier Asian broadcasting exhibition event; the Singapore Pavilion was noticeably represented by 13 media companies. Two of them were animation companies, namely Animata and Animasia.

Government Focus

Singapore's technocratic government has always shown a penchant for engineering or IT-related industries. Computer animation seem to fit the high-tech picture. Having attracted companies to set up shop on the hardware side, i.e.,

production and post-production facilities, including satellite uplink and transmission capabilities (the country now boasts of being home to some 15 satellite programmers using it as a regional beaming base), the infrastructure is now ready for more adventurous nurturing.



Ivan Foo (wearing cap) and classmates from Nanyang Polytechnic at Yoyugi Animation Gakuin, November-December 1994.

In the Singapore context, investing in high-end computers and software is not a financial problem, provided that it justifies public spending.

I say "adventurous" because animation deals with content production, and it is also closely related to

art and design. Such areas have traditionally been given a low priority. Singapore can never be a second Philippines, which is well-known for her pool of talented artists and animators. Virgilio S. Labrador, Marketing Manager at Asia Broadcast Centre, said that, "Up to today, our best selling medium is still the Comics, which we [have been] acquainted with since early childhood. It is an expressive society, basically. Singing, drawing, believing in romance and adventure—this is part and parcel of our visual culture." His view is also shared by fellow Filipino, David Patanne, a full-time animator based at Animata, "due to our economic background

and structure of society, paper and pencil are the cheapest materials we can lay our hands on. We simply draw ourselves into college."

In the Singapore context, investing in high-end computers and software is not a financial problem, provided that it justifies public spending. In August 1996, Alias/Wavefront, the American animation software company, set up

an office in Singapore. Its Senior Asia Sales Manager, Alex Kelly, reiterated a key fact, that the "government and the education segment" is growing rapidly in Singapore.



Drawing and Illustration class at Nanyang Polytechnic. Photo courtesy of Albert Lim.

Education

Indeed it is happening in the polytechnics. In the first quarter of 1996, Nanyang Polytechnic launched its three-year, full-time Diploma in Digital Media Design around the time when GCE "O" and "A" Levels results were announced. It was a fast bid to attract young people into the barely formed industry. The polytechnic has more than 35 SGI machines ranging from Indy to Onyx, and other Mac and PC-based workstations. The course aims to provide professional training in creative and IT skills. To help accomplish this, it signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with Sheridan College, bringing in Canadian expertise and the transference of artistic skills and knowledge.

I had the privilege of visiting this "hottest course in town." Indeed, Sheridan College is exposing the Nanyang Poly students to classical animation first, a step-by-step approach that is the both basic and

necessary.

Over at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, recent developments include the establishment of a sophisticated "Digital Effects Studio" at the

Department of Film and Media Studies. Like at Nanyang Polytechnic, the necessary heavy investment comes from the Economic Development Board, a government statutory board. Both polytechnics are entrusted the tasks of not only training the current cohort of full-time students, but to also conduct courses to upgrade the skills of television and multimedia professionals. Temasek Polytechnic, which had initiated and co-organized the first Animation Fiesta in Singapore in June 1996, is also in the process of revamping its media design courses to meet new challenges.



Garman Animation Studio used 3D animation composited over a live-action background for this scene from the Thai feature *Sayum Kui* (Kantana, 1994).

Animation Companies

Strictly speaking, there are only a handful of animation companies in Singapore, namely Animata, 25

Frames, VHQ, Animasia, ID Imaging and Garman Animation.

Though there are not that many to speak of, each has its own niche. Among them, Animata Productions is the oldest, with 15 years of genuine 2D animation work, which has been slowly progressing from commercials to educational programs, feature films and animated episodes of sitcoms. I first met Mogan Subra (Animata's founder and Creative Director) and his staff in 1994, when they spoke of the medium with passion and optimism, their struggles to get jobs, and at the same time educating funding bodies of the medium's potential.

Subra's award-winning short film, *The Cage*, is of penetrating substance and social meaning. On the commercial side, Animata had also won international awards. The company had also produced Singapore's first animated feature, a 75-minute film on *The Life of the Buddha*. Their in-house dream project, a series entitled *The Adventures of Hardy Driftwood*, has also taken off. Two-and-a-half years in the mak-

ing, Animata has finally found a sponsoring partner, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank who has adopted it as part of their corporate campaign, "Care for the Nature." The



Wendy Boyd teaching Colour Theory module, Nanyang Polytechnic. Photo courtesy of Albert Lim.

series is currently shown daily locally on television on Premier 12. Each 4-1/2 minute episode is created especially for young children and preteens. Launched in November 1996, *Hardy Driftwood* has gone on a roadshow from school to school, and a merchandising package of a poster, coloring book, T-shirt and comics is also being marketed.

Presently, it is on the way making a 23-minute per episode animated series of *Si doel*, a popular sitcom in Indonesia. By the end of 1997, the 13-episode show will be seen on 5 TV stations in Indonesia.

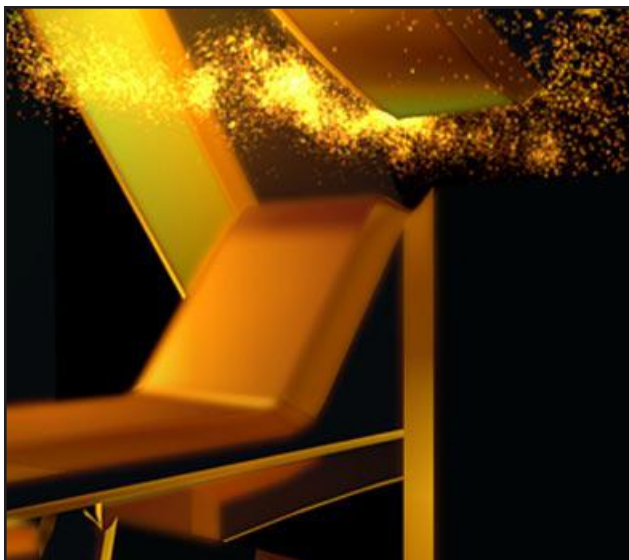
Interestingly, Animasia is also developing along these same lines, but its niche is clearly different. Part of the Wuthelam Group, a multinational corporation, it has recently merged with Kennedy Cartoons, in Manila, the studio wants to explore all forms of animation. Just one-year old, it has already gotten several commissioned projects: *Kleo the Misfit Unicorn*, a 24-episode series for Stanfield Animation in Vancouver and *Chucklewood Critters*, a 13-episode series for Los Angeles' Encore Enterprises. Canadian Glen Kennedy, the owner of Kennedy Cartoons and an experienced animator (mainly with the major American studios based in Manila like the Hanna Barbera's Fil-

Cartoons), noted that "the word got around that Singapore wanted to develop its computer animation industry." He frankly stated that he is attracted by the financial backing of Wuthelam. The company has already installed \$750,000 worth of equipment and is actively looking for animators and is employ-

ing experienced Filipino animators.

Suddenly, there has been a boom in animation in Singapore with a equally sudden demand for animators.

Animasia is also launching its own character animation series, called *Losers in Life*, at this month's NAPTE Convention in New Orleans. Created by Glen Kennedy, it stars two down and out spies in what is



Logo animation by Garman Animation for Singapore's Channel KTV's program, KTV Gold.

characterized as a rock 'n roll comedy in the spirit of *The Simpsons* and Looney Tunes.

Observations

Suddenly, there has been a boom in animation in Singapore with a equally sudden demand for animators. But Singapore is not alone. The region is opening up its broadcasting industry. Barely started, with a few home-grown individual animators and companies like 25 Frames have decided to relocate to Kuala Lumpur. Like Indonesia, Malaysia, by early this year, will have a total of 6 terminal TV channels, 8 cable channels and 20 satellite TV channels.

Quek Siew Liang, Client Servicing Manager at Animata, stated that, "the region is hungry for programs." David Shaw, Senior Animator, at ID Imaging, feels that "the region is in an awake mode; there are opportunities and the environment is more open." (Incidentally, Shaw was recruited from Australia through the Internet about one-and-a-half years ago.)

Singapore is susceptible to foreign influences. *Independence Day*, *The Rock*, *Toy Story*—such movies have exposed the population to the wonders of special effects. Jonathan Ang, Senior 3D Designer at VHQ, a company known more for its one-stop post-production services, noticed that advertising agencies and their clients are now better acquainted with the capabilities of digital design for which there is a growing demand.

But one of the challenges he faced was the time factor. Clients are generally ignorant of the time needed to do animation and expect these jobs to be completed in a couple of weeks. His experience is shared by Shireen V. Pinto,

Director/Administration at ID Imaging (a company which specializes in computer animation), said that, "Clients expect us to cater to last minute jobs. They didn't realize that a 15-second animation job, depending on its complexities, can take up to 2-1/2 months involving four persons' work."

Garman Herigstad, American animator cum animation software trainer, who has extensive experience in Asia, finds Asian clients "tend to want it quick and cheap." Having worked in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand and China, he finds that perhaps art skills are not a prized possession in Chinese society. Now, with the onslaught of computer technology and heavy investment by government in digital media, he cautioned about the inadvertent production of computer technologists and information animators in the long run.

If all goes well, Singapore may meet the expected demand for 2,500 digital media design producers by the year 2000.

The Future

As an animation scholar and a video/filmmaker, I welcome this overwhelming explosion of interest



3D animated commercial produced by VHQ.

in animation. For one thing, Singapore's young people now have more choices of training courses and broadcasting personnel have more opportunities to relearn and upgrade their skills. If all goes well, Singapore may meet the expected demand for 2,500 digital media design producers by the year 2000.

Albert Lim, Coordinator at Nanyang Polytechnics Digital Media Design Centre, puts it clearly that, "Singapore is attempting to create an animation industry, we are at the training people stage. Our ultimate goal is to help contribute to the media hub of this region." I could not disagree. It does make sense that, with the country's strong IT infrastructure and a general non-technophobic populace, Singapore can contribute to the world's animation arena as Philippines has. However, I just wonder whether the higher authorities are aware of the nature of this medium. Donald Duck will quack and strike unreasonably if you try to make him conform; look what happened to Michael Jordan at the Toon City in *Space Jam* and the in the Japanese cult film, *Akira*, which is superbly rebellious in both its storytelling contents and techniques.

Can animators be mass-produced? Lilian Soon, animation teacher at Temasek Polytechnics Videographics and Photography Course, said that, "For last year, out of over 20 students, I was lucky to have 3 who were committed to do an animation work for their graduation project." Recalled Ngee Ann Poly graduate, Juan Foo, for their batch who graduated in 1995-96, only four were keen about studying the medium further. Their enthusiasm,



3D animated commercial produced by VHQ.

though, did lead them to a subsidized trip to Yoyogi Animation Institute in Tokyo, where they attended an 8-week crash course on cel animation. Juan will never forget his Japanese counterparts' fervor, "Oh, they draw while queuing or waiting for classes." It was an eye-opening experience for him.

Two foreign speakers who attended the Animation Fiesta in June observed that, "the country needs more Subras, the kind of *The Cage* productions." In short, animation that "breathes," emotions sublime or expressed.

Well, the machines have arrived, foreign companies have moved their base to Singapore and sponsorship is not lacking. It will be interesting to further monitor Singapore's attempt to develop a computer animation industry and how it will help contribute to the governments overall objective of turning the island republic into Asia's broadcasting hub.

Gigi Hu is now a Ph.D. student based at the University of Hong Kong, Department of Comparative Literature. Prior to this, she was a media and cultural studies lecturer at Temasek Polytechnic, School of Design, Singapore. Last year, with Lilian Soon, she organized Singapore's Animation Fiesta.

Don't Quit Your Day Job, Work the Night Shift

by Piet Kroon

The first thing I do in the morning is check my fax machine. Most mornings I will find designs sent to me by Gill Bradley, the art director of my film *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* Sometimes I find key poses from one of the animators for approval. Then I log in to pick up my email. Production notes from Iain Harvey, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.*'s British producer, or correspondence from Picture Start, the Dutch co-producer. Real urgent issues I try to deal with straight away, but there is not a lot of time in the morning. I have to get to work.

I drop off my son at his school, after a busy family breakfast, and get on the freeway to drive into Glendale. By day, I work as a storyboard artist for Warner Bros. Feature Animation. By night, I direct a 10 minute animated short, that is being

produced in Europe.

From time to time everybody who works in the animation industry should make a short personal film. Most people haven't done their own thing since college. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy working in feature animation very much. The quality standards are high in feature animation. You have to push your limits, so you grow as an artist.

But on the other hand there's the "cog in the machine" trauma. Working in a big studio your artistic scope is precisely defined: you are animating, doing lay outs, clean ups or painting backgrounds etcetera. It is virtually impossible to influence anything beyond your scope. You are making the film that the studio has bought off on. The reels are locked, the dialogue is recorded. The big machine is running.

That's why every now and again you should put together your own little machine. Celebrate your strengths and learn to live with your weaknesses. Exorcise some of your own demons along the way.

Dropping Out to Make DaDA

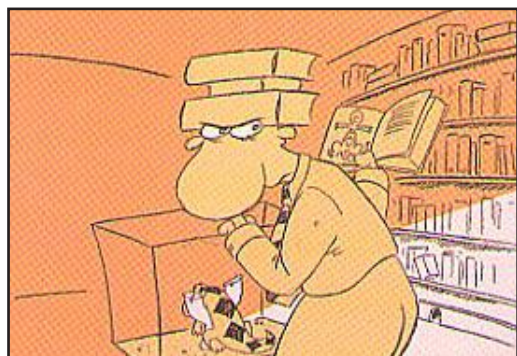
After having animated on Amblimation's *Feivel Goes West*



Piet Kroon

/An American Tail II in London, I dropped out of the feature animation business to make *DaDA*, a 10 minute short, produced by Cilia van Dijk and financed by the Dutch Film Fund. I wrote the script while I animated with Paul Driessen on his film *The Waterpeople*. I guess I took a cue from his work: to develop a film out of a simple, strong, visual idea.

In *DaDA*, everybody walks around carrying books on their heads. The more books stacked on your cranium, the smarter you are perceived to be. The story takes off when a little boy is born with a perfectly round head. To the horror of his parents no books will stay put, no matter what they try. Ultimately, they take their son to a hospital, where a learned scholar saws off the top of the kid's skull to study his brain. The doctor discovers the kid is really a genius. He realizes that it



Piet Kroon's *DaDA*.



Piet Kroon's *DaDA* (Gila van Dijk Film Productions).

is not the books you carry around that matter, it is how you "process" them and create something new out of them. The final twist of the film, that somehow seems to be especially shocking to American audiences (maybe because they are suckered out of a happy ending), is that the father feeds the brilliant brain to the cat. Because with the top sawed off, he can pile an infinite amount of books on his son's head. He'd rather have a kid that looks intelligent, than an intelligent child.

While I was working on *DaDA*, I became a father myself. Actually, the last scene I animated before my son Jesse was born was the one of the expectant father nervously pacing the room (off screen sound effects provided by my wife). Beyond that, life has not imitated art yet. We have no cat.

So what demons did I exorcise? The story has a lot to do with my background in university. Somehow, the book list you attached to your papers always seemed more important than the paper itself.

I studied Film and Theatre Studies, that is where I (re)discovered animation and made my very first film, *The Balancer* (1987).

DaDA made its international

debut as an official selection of the 1995 Berlin Film Festival. Since then, it was screened at Zagreb, Hiroshima, Ottawa and many other international film festivals. Over the two year period it toured the festival circuit, it received a number of special mentions and won a couple of awards, like the Golden Mikeldi for

Best Animated Film at the Bilbao Short Film and Documentary Festival 1995.

From time to time everybody who works in the animation industry should make a short personal film.

Ready To Be a Cog Again

It took me two-and-a-half years to complete *DaDA*. I wrote and directed it, animated (most of) it, organized the xerox and paint (with the help of numerous volunteers), personally put down every single cel under the camera (those are my fingerprints up there!), edited it, and supervised the effects and sound editing. Believe me, even though it was a blast, after that you are ready to be a cog in the machine again.

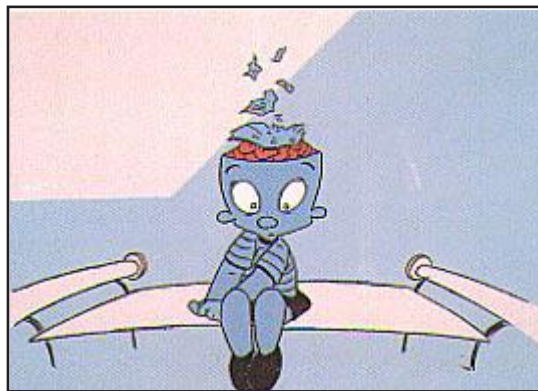
So a year-and-a-half ago I moved out to Los Angeles to work as a storyboard artist for Warner Bros. Feature Animation. WBFA is a brand new outfit, which is great from my point of view, because everything is still in flux. There are a lot of opportunities to grow.

Animating is like acting.

Storyboarding, to me, is filmmaking in the truest sense. It is about experimenting and developing. You basically get to take the first whack at visualizing a script or a treatment. You go through the whole cinematographic process of staging, breaking down sequences into shots. And you explore character relationships, dream up gags, anything to make the film more entertaining.

You sketch out your story ideas and pitch them to the director and the producer. Like a carsalesman you talk them through the continuity boards, giving your best shot to sell the excitement, the drama, the fun. Sometimes they buy it, sometimes they don't. Your soul gets stepped on a lot in story. It's one thing when an idea or gag is rejected, what is worse is when they are half used or used the wrong way.

On the basis of the storyboards the timing of the film is worked out in the storyreels, the first mock up version of the film to be, complete with soundeffects and scratch dialogue. Then the exact cinematography of the shots is determined in lay out and the scenes are distributed to the animators. So when you work in story there will never be a single drawing on the screen that you can call your own. Nothing to point at. There are not many people willing to be bored to death with endless stories about who thought



Piet Kroon's *DaDA*.

of what and which idea sparked what gag three months later.

The film I work on at Warner Bros. is called *Quest for Camelot*, directed by Frederic DuChau and produced by Frank Gladstone. It is to be the first fully animated feature that this studio produces, not counting *Space Jam*, as a combination of live action and animation, and *Cats Don't Dance* (which Warners basically acquired as part of the merger with Turner).

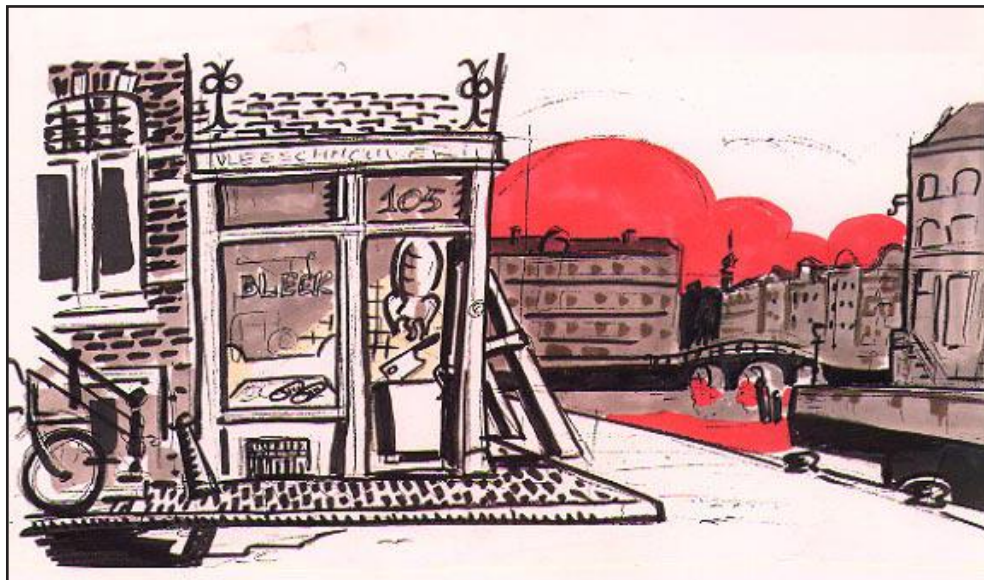
Mixing Arthurian myth and fantasy elements, *Quest* tells the story of a young girl who has to rise above herself to find the lost sword Excalibur before a ruthless barbarian overthrows Camelot. For the story crew, it presented a great challenge, since the film was, to a large extent, developed on the boards. A crew of 12 storyboard artists delved in and produced numerous sequences and put several versions of the film on a reel. Of course, there were trials and tribulations and, as always, it had to get really bad in order to get any better. There are always war stories. The good thing is that Warners did not lose its cool. They kept hammering away at it to get it right. Story on *Quest* is winding down now and the studio is already

in full production.

Of all the major studios that got into feature animation, Warners has, in my mind, the biggest potential to actually get a piece of the Mouses action. The box office success of *Space Jam* is a case in point. The

and years on a film. There are a number of reasons for this: their films are highly personal, executed in a highly personal style, and this way they do not have to split the money.

I was always at odds with this



Layout design for Piet Kroon's *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.*

studio is part of a gigantic media conglomerate and can really put a film in the marketplace. My son had never heard of Michael Jordan, but guess who he pretends to be when he is within 10 feet of a ball now?

T.R.A.N.S.I.T.

Right before I moved to America I had written and storyboarded another short film, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* I left while it was looking to get financed. Producers Iain Harvey and Cecile Wijne had to raise serious money (that is, for an independent short), because of the special way the film was set up. *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* is a film in sequences, each sequence (of about a minute each) to be designed in a different graphic style, to be animated by a different animator, directed by me by fax, phone and email from L.A.

In the Netherlands, most directors of animated films tend to work alone, and tend to work for years

approach. Some people are great designers, but couldn't animate to save their life. Some great animators don't have a story to tell. I believe working with different people can only strengthen your film. It's better to get feedback upfront than after the fact. As a director, you should be confident enough to take in influences, harness them and keep the vision. Also, on a more practical level, with a bigger team you can produce the film a lot faster and move on to the next idea. Two-and-a-half years is a long time to spend on 10 minutes.

It's one thing when an idea or gag is rejected, what is worse is when they are half used or used the wrong way.

The downside of working with more people is you have to have money to pay them. When you work on your own brainchild, its



Character design by Gill Bradley for Piet Kroon's *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* (Nice image, but taken from a less than optimum xerox copy; lines need to be darker.)

easy to work for peanuts. If the government grant runs out, you just take on commercials to keep yourself going. That's how I produced *DaDa* and I did have a few people I paid on that.

The downside of working with more people is you have to have money to pay them. When you work on your own brainchild, it's easy to work for peanuts.

Last summer, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T* finally came together as a full-blown international coproduction with financing from the Dutch Film Fund, Canal + in France and Channel 4 in England. So, now I spend my evenings writing notes and memos, reboarding bits and pieces, doing layouts and character sketches. Five sequences are already underway. I took great care to make an extensive storyboard and a tight reel to guide the animators along. Later this month the first scenes will start to trickle in, and I will know if the monster will come alive.



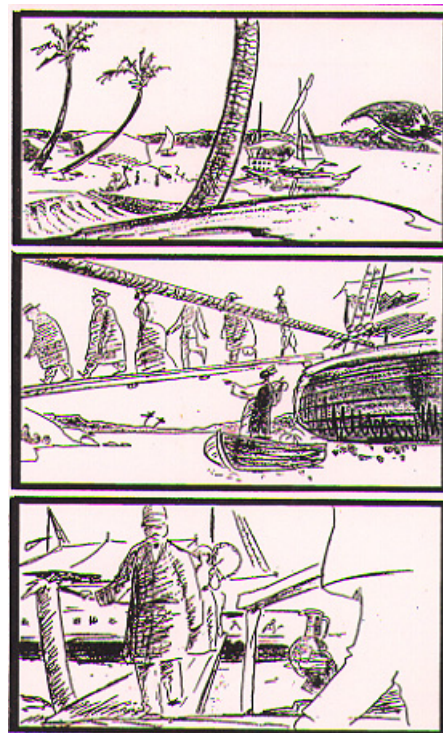
Character modelsheet for Piet Kroon's *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.*

Set in the 20s, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T* tells the story of a tragic love triangle. We meet three characters and find out just how they interrelate as the

film sweeps across Europe in seven sequences. Working out the art direction proved to be an enormous task. London-based art director Gill Bradley selected and defined seven graphic styles, derived from the art deco period, inventing new animation techniques along the way.

Getting the characters to translate consistently from style to style was one of the biggest tricks of the film. We decided to base the characters on real actors. Last November, when I was on a quick working visit to London, we arranged a video shoot. We had cast the film beforehand. We had the actors act out scenes from the film, as reference for the animators. The main purpose was to give the animators a clear picture of who the characters are. But they might also pick up some little idiosyncratic quirks: pouting lips or a sweltering blink. To me, that is what separates great animation from good animation: if the animator reaches into his or her own experience and captures the stuff that life is made of. Have your characters rub their noses like your aunt Edna and you've made them human. The extraordinary lies in the ordinary.

I was lucky to get a great team of animators to work on *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* Michael Dudok de Wit, whose film *The Monk and the Fish* was nominated for an Academy Award in 1994, is doing a sequence that is set on an luxurious ocean liner. Keiko Masuda, who did marvelous work on *The Taylor of Gloucester*, animates a fateful night in Venice. Arjan Wilschut, a young and coming Dutch animator who also animated on *DaDa* (and most recently on Joanna Quinns *Famous Fred*), has a bloody confrontation in Amsterdam. Valerie Carmona, a charming independent filmmaker



Frames from storyboard for Piet Kroon's *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.*

from France, presents a champagne picnic in St. Tropez. A great new talent fresh from the Royal College of Art, Andrew Higgins, will conduct a murderous tour of Egypt, together with Gill Bradley. Another great Dutch animator, Jeroen van Blaaderen, gives chase on the Orient Express. Nicolette van Gendt, who did some amazing work on Geoff Dunbar's *Daumier's Law*, gets to handle the steamy love scenes in Baden-Baden.

In April, I will take another trip to England to direct the opening and closing sequences. They will be done by Richard Randolph of Ealing Animation and involve the North Sea, a diver, and hopefully no rain.

By July 1997, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T* should be ready, and strawberries will never be the same . . .

Piet Kroon is a Dutch filmmaker currently employed during the day at Warner Bros. Feature Animation in Glendale.

Suzan Pitt: *An Animator's Journey*

by Jackie Leger

Suzan Pitt's concern for psychological explorations of the female psyche has been a vital force behind her career for over 25 years. This can be seen in *Crocus*, one of her early films which is a surrealist exploration into female sexuality, as well as in *Asparagus*, a classic that explores subliminal imagery of the feminine dream, and in her most recent film *Joy Street*, her chef d'oeuvre that relates issues of depression and healing.

Many of her films were developed in collaboration with her students, a fact which Pitt considers an important part of her artistic development.

For many years, Pitt has been merging the female psyche to her personal creative projects in such areas as painting, performance art, and theater design, as well as animation. One might say that she is a Renaissance woman. While the deep dark depths of the psychology of being are rarely brought out in animation, Pitt can, in this respect, be associated with pioneer animator Winsor McCay. His early comic strip/film *Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend* probed inner world dreams as masterpieces of whimsy, imagination, wit and nightmares, depicting human fears and delusions. With films full of observations and

insights, both McCay and Pitt aimed to give relevance to their characters. Pitt has often criticized the animation business as avoiding the main goal of story telling, which is having something relevant to say.

An Eerie Doll House

Suzan Pitt grew up in Kansas City, Missouri and relates much of her imagery to an eerie doll house found in an attic of an old house, where she would climb dark stairs to get to this miniature, imaginary world. This doll house became her own private theater, where she created stories which later influenced her films.

Pitt's creative career began at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where in 1965 she received her BFA in Painting. Like many of her generation, she began filmmaking with a hand held 8mm camera; transferring some 200 drawings onto film. One of her early pieces in 16mm *Bowl, Theater, Garden, Marble Game* made use of cutout images arranged in a semiabstract form. A

recipient of many grants and an avid teacher, she began her most important formative years with the completion of *Crocus*, a surrealist study and an ode to the feminine dream and the natural world. Many of her films were developed in collaboration with her students, a fact



Suzan Pitt's *Joy Street*.

which Pitt considers an important part of her artistic development. The success of such early films as *A City Trip*, *Jefferson Circus Songs* and *Cels*, made with students at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, brought her recognition and gave her the experience needed to produce larger projects.

Asparagus is the now classic film that secured Pitt's reputation as a major American animator. After taking four years to make, *Asparagus*, completed in 1979, won awards



Suzan Pitt's *Joy Street*.

around the world, including First Prize at the Oberhausen Film Festival in Germany and awards at Ann Arbor, Baltimore and Atlanta Film Festivals in the US. Designed like a Pandora's box, the film opens up the depth of Pitt's own inner psyche, merging sensual and surrealistic imagery in the form of a Freudian dream. Focusing on erotic metaphors and intellectual references, she makes this matted-cel work a visionary masterpiece.

Expanded Cinema

By the late 1970s, Pitt was involved in the Expanded Cinema movement which led her to merge performance art with animation. Pitt's introduction to this art form was developed in a course she taught in 1976 at Harvard's Carpenter Center entitled Loops. In the class, she had her students deconstruct animation to analyze all of its parts. This exercise grew into a large animated/live show that included people as cartoons, experimental imagery from rear screen projection, and drawing on soundtracks. These early endeavors expanded her work into the world of real space and time, which grew into many more performances. In 1980, Pitt presented a performance at the Venice Biennial entitled *Suone e Immagine*, set to the music of Richard

Teitelbaum. Also in 1980, she created *Window*, a three dimensional interior and film installation commissioned and exhibited by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. And in 1985, she created *ESO-S*, a two screen performance with live music by John and Evan Laurie done at the Pyramid Club in New York.

Continuing her painting career, Pitt exhibited widely with a solo exhibition at the Denise Rene Gallery in Dusseldorf and the Delahuty Gallery in New York, as well as several group exhibitions. These led to an invitation to create the sets, costumes and animation for *The Magic Flute*, an experimental opera created by the avant-garde

Richard Foreman's *Symphony for Rats* in New York. Lehnhoff then engaged her again for his production of Berlioz' *The Damnation of Faust* for the State Opera of Hamburg, a large budget production in a high-end theater, with an hour of animation and effects interspersed throughout the three hour performance.

Designed like a Pandora's box, the film opens up the depth of Pitt's own inner psyche, merging sensual and surrealistic imagery in the form of a Freudian dream.

Joy Street

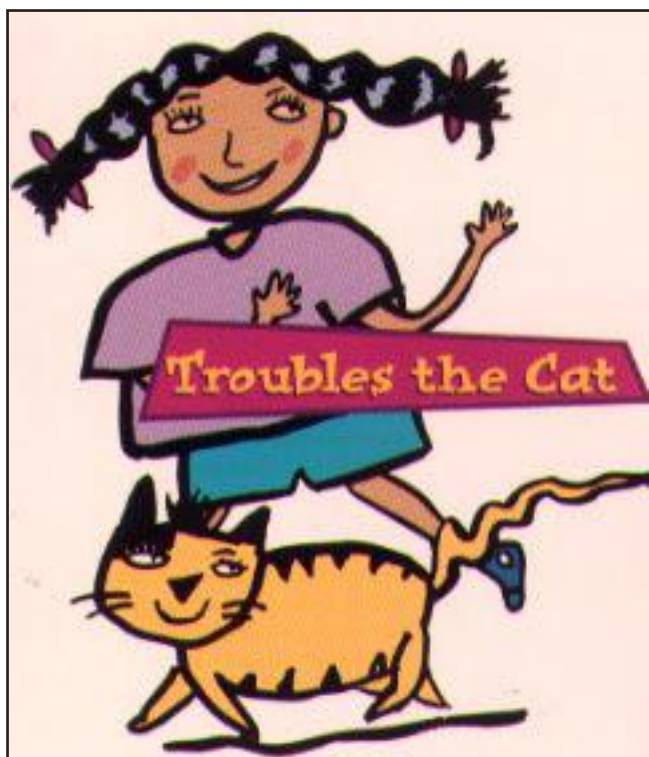
During the 1990s, Pitt's work became focused on the natural environment and political activism, in particular rain forest activism. These activities and her travels to exotic places like Guatemala, Belize and Mexico had a major impact on



Suzan Pitt's *Joy Street*.

director Nicholas Lehnhoff. After doing projections for this unconventional New Age production from 1983-87, she designed the sets for

her career and her most important personal film *Joy Street*. Made in 1995, it has been acclaimed at every major film festival from



Troubles the Cat, directed by Pitt for The Ink Tank, which she has recently signed a long-term agreement with as part of its Ink Tank Too operation.

this bad dream by an animated mouse (and what a mouse!), Pitt develops the second part of the film as an ode to the great classics of animation, with all the dynamism and pacing of a 1930s Fleischer cartoon. She blends her personal aesthetic with all the pizzazz of a master animator. The energy of the mouse, whirling with joy and innocence, and the deep pain of the woman make a truly interesting movie experience. Pitt's statement throughout the film reflects the passing of nature and innocence as a road to depression and

The energy of the mouse, whirling with joy and innocence, and the deep pain of the woman make a truly interesting movie experience.

sented at the Virginia International Festival, with the theme of "Wild Places/Endangered Species." She also recently directed *Troubles the Cat*, 12 different six-minute sequences produced by The Ink Tank for the Cartoon Network educational series, *Big Bag*, which explore issues of ethnicity and self-awareness. Pitt is now one of the directors represented on the roster of The Ink Tank Too, a new division of The Ink Tank in New York. Pitt's activism, diversity and creativity will keep her work relevant well into the next millennium.

Hiroshima to London, and all those in between.

Traveling through Guatemala in 1993, she began painting lively images of animals and birds with color and fantasy, very much influenced by natural settings of the rain forests. These evolved into images in *Joy Street*. During this time, she also received several commissions for paintings, including a mural for the US Post Office in Fountain City, Wisconsin, and a series of silkscreens for Artists for Nature, an activist group in Germany exhibited at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Analyzing *Joy Street*, one might say it is the culmination of Pitt's life as an artist and a woman. The images begin like a German Expressionist nightmare of a woman depressed by the concrete world she lives in. Set to the haunting music of The Jazz Passengers, this visual poem relates a sort of psychodrama of a plight which in fact touches the life of many. Saved from

emptiness.

Today, Pitt continues to travel and present her work at festivals and universities. She often gives a lecture entitled "Cartoon Wilderness," which discusses parallel histories of film animation, and wilderness exploration and exploitation. This program was recently pre-

Jackie Leger is a Santa Monica-based documentary filmmaker interested in the roots of American experimental film.



Suzan Pitt's *Asparagus*.

Suzan Pitt Animation Filmography

Animated Films

The following films, except when noted, were produced and directed by Pitt. All were in color, except where noted.

Bowl, Theatre, Garden, Marble Game (1970), 7 min., 16mm.

**Crocus* (1971) 7 min., 16mm.

A City Trip (1972), 3 min., 16mm.

Cels (1972), 6 min., 16mm.

Whitney Commercial (Whitney Museum of Art, 1973), 3 min., 16mm.

**Jefferson Circus Songs* (1973), 20 min., 16mm.

**Asparagus* (1979), 20 min., 16mm.

Night Fire Dance (Columbia Masterworks Records, 1986) (Co-Director), 1 min., 35mm., black & white.
Music video, with music by Andreas Vollenweider.

Big Time (Warner Records, 1986) (Storyboard & Animation), Music video; music by Peter Gabriel.

Surf or Die (Profile Records), 3 min., 35mm. Music video; music by The Surf M.C.s.

The Damnation of Faust (Hamburg State Opera, 1988), one hour, 35mm.

Bam Video (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1990), 3 min., 35mm.

Colors/Colores (Public Broadcasting System, 1995, 1 min. 15 sec., video.

Joy Street (Channel Four & PBS), 24 min., 35mm.

Troubles the Cat (The Ink Tank, 1996) (Director), 12 six-minute sequences for the Cartoon Network.

*Distributed by the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the British Film Institute, London.

Expanded Film Performances

Loops (Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1976), a multidimensional, live film theater performance combining film on several scenes, actors and music by the Harvard Composers Ensemble.

Asparagus (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1979), film installation and exhibition of drawings.

Suone E. Immagine (Venice Biennale), film performance with composer Richard Teitelbaum.

ESO-S (The Pyramid Club, New York, 1985), a two-screen film performance with live music by John and Evan Lurie.

Stage & Costume Design

The Magic Flute (State Opera Theater, Weisbaden, Germany, 1983-87). Sets, costumes, and animated films for production that was in repertoire for several years..

Richard Foreman's *Symphony for Rats* (1988), animated sequences. (New York City.)

The Damnation of Faust by Hector Berlioz (State Opera Theater, Hamburg). Sets, costumes and animated films.

In Passing

Louise Beaudet: A Passion For Animation

On January 3, Louise Beaudet, perhaps the most famous and respected animation archivist in the world died of lung cancer. In her role as curator of Montréal's Cinémathèque Québécoise, she more than helped fulfill that organization's special interest in animation. Herein are a few thoughts by some of the people who knew and/or worked with her. But first, to provide some general background, we start off with the two part press release issued by the Cinémathèque Québécoise.

International Luminary in the World of Animation Louise Beaudet Dies at Age of 69

Montréal, January 7, 1997—It is with sadness that the Cinémathèque Québécoise learned of the death of Madam Louise Beaudet, on January 3 as the result of a long illness.

Louise Beaudet worked at the Cinémathèque Québécoise for 28 years. She was first hired to coordinate a large animation retrospective at the 1967 World's Fair in Montréal (Expo 67), she was then made Curator of Animation, a position she held until October 1996.

During her long career, Louise Beaudet manifested a boundless passion for animation. The international animation community acknowledged that she played a major role in establishing the validity

of this cinematic genre. She authored a number of historical texts, essays and monographs. Her exceptional programming skills were frequently in demand by festivals for which she organized retrospectives which were always rich and surprising.

Louise Beaudet started the Canadian chapter of the International Animated Film Association (ASIFA-Canada) for which she served as president for more than 10 years. In September, 1996, ASIFA-Canada presented her with the honorary Norman McLaren Heritage Award at the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

In January 1995, Louise Beaudet was the first recipient of a new award created by ASIFA-East, in New York, to honor people who, while not being animators, devoted their lives to promote independent animation.

Her colleagues at the Cinémathèque, as well as the numerous animators in many countries who knew her, cannot forget her smile which was as strong as her passion for animation.

Summary of Her Career

Beginning in 1973, Louise Beaudet was Curator of the Animation Section of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, where she had been working full-time since 1968, after having collaborated in the Retrospective of International Animation for Expo 67.

*Louise
Beaudet:
une passion
pour
l'animation*

Le 3 janvier, Louise Beaudet, peut-être la plus célèbre et la plus respectée des conservateurs de cinéma d'animation dans le monde, est décédée. Le texte ci-après est un communiqué de presse de la Cinémathèque Québécoise qui retrace les grandes lignes de sa carrière. Quelques collègues et amis ont également apporté leur témoignage (texte en anglais seulement, voir ci-contre)

She shared her knowledge of animated film with the Franco-Québécoise Office, the New York Animation Festival (she was a jury member in 1975), the Canadian Film Institute, at the Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton International Animation Festivals, at the New York Film Library (at a 1978 symposium), the Sinking Creek Film Celebration in Nashville (1979), the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of retrospectives of the 40th and 50th anniversaries of the National Film

Board of Canada (1980, 1989), and at the Varna Animation Festival in Bulgaria for a Canadian retrospective (1981).

Starting in 1982, she was invited to prepare and present exhibitions on animation, organize retrospectives, or be part of symposiums devoted to pioneers and film archives by such organizations as the Musée des beaux-arts in Montréal, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Pacific Film Archives at the University of California,

Sommité internationale en matière de cinéma d'animation

Louise Beaudet décédée à l'âge de 69 ans

Montréal, le 7 janvier 1997 – C'est avec tristesse que la Cinéma-thèque québécoise a appris le décès de Madame Louise Beaudet, survenu le 3 janvier dernier des suites d'une longue maladie.

Louise Beaudet a été à l'emploi de la Cinéma-thèque québécoise pendant 28 ans. Engagée initialement pour coordonner l'organisation d'une importante rétrospective de cinéma d'animation présentée dans le cadre de l'Exposition Universelle de 1967, elle s'est par la suite vu confier la fonction de conservateur du cinéma d'animation. C'est ce poste qu'elle a occupé jusqu'à octobre 1996.

Tout au long de sa carrière, Louise Beaudet a manifesté une passion sans limite pour le cinéma d'animation. Son rôle prépondérant dans la mise en valeur de ce genre cinématographique est reconnu à l'échelle internationale. Elle est l'auteur de nombreux textes historiques, essais et monographies. Ses qualités exceptionnelles de programmatrice étaient régulièrement sollicitées par les festivals pour lesquels elle organisait des rétrospectives toujours riches et étonnantes.

Louise Beaudet est à l'origine du chapitre canadien de l'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA-Canda) dont elle a occupé la présidence pendant plus de 10 ans. En septembre 1996, ASIFA-Canada lui a décerné le prix honorifique "Heritage Norman McLaren" à l'oc-



Front half of cover illustration by Jacques Drouin from the Tribute to Louise Beaudet issue of the ASIFA-Canada magazine (September 1996).

Berkeley, the San Francisco Film Festival, the Pacific Cinematheque in Vancouver, and festivals in Bristol, Brussels and Annecy (jury member in 1985), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

She wrote articles for Québécoise, Canadian and French cinema journals, texts for exhibition catalogues at Berlin and Montréal (in 1982), and for works jointly published by the Cinémathèque Québécoise and Les éditions Pierre Lherminier in Paris (*Les cinémas Canadiens*), with the Cinémathèque de Toulouse for *Charles R. Bowers ou le mariage du slapsticks et de l'animation* and *Du nouveau sur Charley Bowers*. She is the author of the monograph, *À la recherche de Segundo de Chomon*, published by the Annecy Festival (1985) on the occasion of a retrospective of this Spanish pioneer.

She was a member of the Board of Directors of ASIFA-Canada from 1970 to 1979.

On January 25, 1996, ASIFA-East paid homage to her for her over 25 years of accomplishments: her building of the Cinémathèque's collection, her collaboration with numerous festivals, her participation and creation of special programs, her good taste in the field of animation, and her connivance (complicity) with the animation filmmaking community. Louis Beaudet is the first recipient of this new award.

—Translated from the French by Harvey Deneroff & Annick Teninge

**Tom Knott, Warner Bros.
Feature Animation (formerly
Director, Ottawa International
Animation Festival)**

Louise Beaudet was a pioneer in every sense of the word, however she would not have considered herself one. Although not a

filmmaker, Louise filled a role of equal importance, that of promoting films and filmmakers both old and new. More importantly, she ensured that many of these films would be able to be seen by future generations through her efforts as an archivist. No one had more passion for animation as an artform than Louise. In the world of animation she was a treasured icon.

While I was with the Ottawa International Animation Festival I had the opportunity to work with Louise on a number of occasions. She always provided the greatest retrospectives. The Festival was not a Festival without the presence of Louise.

Looking back on the current resurgence and interest in animation the foundation was not laid by such films as *The Lion King* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, but by the pioneering efforts of people like Louise Beaudet. Louise you will be missed.

**Caroline Leaf, Filmmaker,
Cambridge, Massachusetts**

Every Wednesday evening in Montreal, Louise hosted a program of animation films at the Cinémathèque Québécoise. I counted on Louise's programming to keep me up to date and informed about what was happening around the world in animation. There were films from festivals...no need to leave Montreal to see the best of the festivals...and archival films, and often filmmakers were brought in. It was great programming. I will always remember Louise's chuckling laugh. She was really a lady, poised and sparkling.

**Gerald Potterton, Gerald
Potterton Productions,
Montréal**

With the passing of Louise

casation du festival du cinéma d'animation d'Ottawa.

En janvier 1995, Louise Beaudet fut la première récipiendaire d'un nouveau prix créé par le groupe américain ASIFA-East pour souligner le soutien offert par des personnes qui, sans être des animateurs, ont consacré leur vie à la mise en valeur du cinéma indépendant.

Ses collègues de la Cinémathèque, aussi bien que les animateurs de nombreux pays qui ont fréquenté Louise ne sont pas prêts d'oublier son sourire qui n'avait d'égal que sa passion pour le cinéma d'animation.

Resumé de carrière

Louise Beaudet est conservateur depuis fin 1973 de la section Animation à la Cinémathèque québécoise où elle est permanente depuis 1968, après avoir collaboré à la rétrospective mondiale du Cinéma d'Animation dans le cadre d'Expo 1967.

Elle a fait profiter de ses connaissances du cinéma d'animation à l'Office franco-québécois, au Festival du Film de New-York (membre du Jury en 1975), à l'Institut canadien du Film, aux Festivals Internationaux d'Ottawa, Toronto et Hamilton, au New-York Film Library (symposium en 1978), au Sinking Creek Film Celebration de Nashville (1979), au Musée d'Art Moderne de New-York dans le cadre d'une rétrospective pour le 40e et le 50e anniversaire de l'O.N.F. (1980, 1989), au Festival de Varna en Bulgarie pour une rétrospective canadienne (1981).

Depuis 1982, pour préparer et présenter des expositions sur le cinéma d'animation, organiser des rétrospectives ou participer à des travaux consacrés à des pionniers et aux archives de cinémathèques,

Beaudet, the animation world has lost one of its greatest friends. Her kindness, humor, helpfulness and knowledge of just about anything to do with animation *and* its exponents around the globe was unique. Sleep well Louise, we will not forget you.



Left to right: Adrienne Mancina, Louise Beaudet, Jacques Drouin, and Helene Tanguay at Ottawa 96. Photo by Candy Kugel.

Hélène Tanguay, National Film Board of Canada

Remembering Louise

Louise Beaudet died of cancer on January 3. For the past 18 months, we both found ourselves going to the same hospital, as a little over a year ago I suffered a stroke. I spent many, many days during the last year at the hospital for tests of all kinds; at the same time, Louise was going through radiotherapy and chemotherapy. And we met more than once in the corridor. We were both going through some very difficult times. Thank God my health is good now. Because we were both home last year, we had the chance to visit more and think about life and how precious it is. Writing these words makes me feel happy and sad at the same time. I miss Louise a lot and, at the same time, feel very privileged to

have been able to be together so much.

Louise and I have been colleagues and friends for over two decades. Her dedication to the art of animation really inspired me through the years. When I started at the NFB in the Festivals Office in 1970, I did not know that much about cinema and even less about animation. I loved cartoons, like everybody else, but was ignorant about Canadian and international animation. In 1974, the Festivals Office moved next to Norman McLaren and Grant Munro's office—what a way to introduce me to such a wonderful world! I am not sure of the exact date, but I think I met Louise for the first

time in 1975. The Festivals Office collaborated constantly with her at the Cinémathèque Québécoise.

Louise is, as far as I'm concerned, the best animation programmer I have ever known. She always knew what to select and how to present it. The order of the films in every program was perfect. We all know how important it is for a film to be well programmed.

In 1979, I joined ASIFA-Canada and was elected to the board the same year. I spent the next 15 years with Louise working on special projects, organizing events, working on the magazine, doing numerous collaborations with the Ottawa Festival and its many directors, welcoming international guests to Montréal like Yuri Norstein, Bob Clampett, Lou Bunin to name only a few. So many came to the Cinémathèque through the years. Thanks to Louise, as I met and discovered so many great animators,

elle a été invitée par le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, le Musée d'Art Moderne de New-York, la Pacific Film Archives de Berkeley, l'Université de Californie, le Festival de San Francisco, la Pacific Cinémathèque de Vancouver, les festivals de Bristol, Bruxelles et Annecy (membre du Jury en 1985), le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Boston.

Elle est l'auteur d'articles parus dans les revues de cinéma québécoises, canadiennes et françaises, de textes pour des catalogues d'exposition à Berlin et Montréal (en 1982) et de travaux co-édités par la Cinémathèque québécoise et les éditions Pierre Lherminier de Paris (*les cinémas canadiens*), avec la Cinémathèque de Toulouse pour *Charles R. Bowers ou le mariage du slapstick et de l'animation* et *Du nouveau sur Charley Bowers*. Elle est l'auteur de la monographie *A la recherche de Segundo de Chomon* publiée par le Festival d'Annecy 1985 à l'occasion d'une rétrospective de ce pionnier espagnol.

Elle exerce des responsabilités au sein du Conseil d'Administration de l'ASIFA Canada de 1970 à 1991.

Le 25 janvier 1996, ASIFA-East lui a rendu hommage pour le travail accompli depuis plus de 25 ans: la mise en place de la collection de la Cinémathèque, sa collaboration à de nombreux festivals, sa participation à l'élaboration de programmes spéciaux, son bon goût en matière d'animation et sa connivence de tous les instants avec la communauté des cinéastes d'animation. Louise Beaudet est la première récipiendaire de ce nouveau prix.

my life changed!

It was also because of her that I joined the ASIFA-International Board of Directors. I spent 6 years on the board with a fantastic group of individuals. Our meetings were more than long, but I have to say that those years were so formative and enriching. I met the Kinoshitas, Jerzy Kucia, Pat Webb, Nicole Salomon, and so many others dedicated to the development and promotion of animation throughout the world. I have been active in ASIFA for so many years because of her.

Louise and I worked hard and enjoyed working together. She used to say the same thing about me. We worked so well as a team. We had so much fun inventing new projects. We believed in animation and we loved animators. I still do, of course! We also wanted to have a strong ASIFA-Canada, that was representative of its membership. Canada is a huge country and we did our best to reach out and have personal contacts with the membership. I made so many new friends through ASIFA.

We both retired from the ASIFA-Canada Board a few years ago. I left the Festivals Office to become the Marketing Officer for the English Animation Department at the NFB. Now, I really work closely with the animators! It's really great to be around Wendy Tilby, Paul Driessen, Chris Hinton, John Weldon, Janet Perlman, and all the new "younger" animators.

I miss working with Louise. I miss our conversations on animation and cinema in general. I miss my friend.

When Louise died, she not only

left us a big hole in our lives, Louise left behind a mountain of accomplishments. She was, is, and will always be such a force in the animation world.



Left to right: Hubert Tison, Louise Beaudet and Adrian Mancía at last year's Ottawa Animation Festival.

Adrienne Mancía, Museum of Modern Art, New York

The following is excerpted from Mark Langer's interview with Mancía in last month's issue of Animation World Magazine.

The first international animation program I did at the museum was after the Zagreb Festival in 1972. Zagreb was different then, filled with freshness, vitality and humor. The work coming from the Zagreb Studio was so lively and inventive. I met Louise Beaudet there and we decided to collaborate to bring these films to North America—she to the Cinémathèque Québécoise

in Montreal and me to New York.

The "Best of Zagreb" show was a success, and we began to bring in other venues, such as Edith Kramers Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley and the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Boston. Increasingly, there were other venues that wanted the Zagreb show that Louise and I programmed, but we couldn't handle the work. We were able to do what we could only because Yugoslavia would fund cultural activities. The head of the Studio, Zelimir Matko, was an entrepreneur. He headed sales and marketing for the Zagreb Studio and he helped Louise and I bring the films we chose to North America by speaking to various producers and animators and encouraging them to cooperate with us.

Louise had the best animation archive in the world in Montreal and was my guide to all this. We decided that based on the "Best of Zagreb" show, we would do the "Best of Annecy" in alternate years. We also did a "Best of Ottawa" once and two "Best of Hiroshima" shows. These programs were always chronically underfunded. We would get travel and hospitality by being invited to sit on juries, by begging for hospitality from the festivals or sometimes a little from our institutions to cover print transportation, etc.

What I tried to do with the programming, a little subversively, was to draw it out for a week. With the "Best of Zagreb" or "Annecy" as an anchor, we would also program homages to filmmakers or present

animation from various countries—Japanese animation, Khitruk, Pritt Pjarn, and so on. We did our “Best of . . .” until a year ago. Louise has been in ill health and wanted to retire. This, plus a shortage of funds stopped the program. Frankly, outside of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, I do not know an institution where the exhibition of animation is a priority.

David Ehrlich, Filmmaker & ASIFA-International Vice President, Randolph, Vermont

The following is excerpted from Ehrlich's obituary in the January 1997 issue of the ASIFA-East Anymator; in turn, it was based on a piece in the September 1996 ASIFA-Canada magazine.

I first met Louise in 1982. She was sitting on the patio outside of the old Annecy Casino sipping a glass of white wine with a few male admirers and she graciously invited me to sit down. After pouring me a

glass, she asked me what I had thought of Paul Driessens new film. I remember that in the first blush of wine to my cheeks, I uttered a few words of what I naively thought passed for wisdom. Louise gently smiled, placed her hand on my arm and said: “But my dear, surely you noticed that . . .” And she launched into one of the most thoroughly perceptive analyses of a film I had ever heard at a festival. Awed, all I could do was bring the glass to my lips and nod appreciatively.

Now, 15 years and a number of glasses of wine later, I am still a bit awed by this wonderful lady, by all the energy and charm she mustered to put together the 1982 Art of Animation show at the Montréal Museum of Fine Art (I say “charm” because who else but Louise could have talked the Czechs into parting with their whole Trnka collection!), by all the wonderful shows she single-handedly organized at the Cinémathèque Québécoise, by her leadership of ASIFA-Canada and by the professionalism and warmth

with which she would always receive the visiting animators I would bring to her through the years. More than anyone I know in our family of animation, Louise represented the nobility and purity to which we all aspire. She was always honest with others and with her own ideas, and she continued to fight unhesitatingly and vigorously for what she felt was the highest form of our art. Thank you Louise, for what you have done for all of us. We hold up our glasses and toast you in all our languages, and I can hear you saying, “But my dears, I thank all of you for what you have done for animation! I've done nothing.” Well, Louise, you've done everything and we love you.

For more on Louise Beaudet, we heartily recommend readers to take a look at the September 1996 issue of ASIFA-Canada, devoted to a “Tribute to Louise Beaudet,” that includes 12 articles celebrating her life and career.

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In Passing

Renzo Kinoshita: A Talk With Miyasan Sadao Miyamoto

by Harvey Deneroff



Renzo Kinoshita - 1990

Renzo Kinoshita began working as an independent animator in 1967. His own major work, *Made in Japan* won the Grand Prix at the New York International Animation Festival in 1972. He became involved with ASIFA (The International Animated Film Association) and was a tower of strength as vice president. His wisdom and dedication had a great influence on animation in Japan and throughout Asia and he established the ASIFA Japan national group in 1981. In 1985, the first Hiroshima Animation Festival was held as a result of long years of tireless work by him and his wife Sayoko. His other well-known works include *Japanese* (1977)—a send up of all things Japanese, *Picadon*

(1978)—a moving portrayal of the horror of the A-bomb attack on Hiroshima, and *The Last Air Raid Kumagaya* (1993). It was a great pleasure to work with him and I was proud to be his friend. I will miss him sorely."

—Pat Raine Webb, President, ASIFA-UK

As Pat Webb so eloquently states in her brief tribute, Renzo Kinoshita was a major figure in the international animation community. For many, he and his wife Sayoko were the personification of the spirit of independent filmmaking in Japan, and were closely associated with ASIFA-Japan and the Hiroshima Animation Festival. But in talking to Miyasan Sadao Miyamoto, a veteran Japanese animation artist who knew Renzo since they were both apprentice animators in Osaka back in 1957, I got a somewhat different perspective on him as both artist and human being.

Miyasan, whose appearance, with trim beard and bald head, as he likes to point out, makes him look very much like Renzo, is currently character art manager at Disney Consumer Products in Burbank. He came there after working as a directing animator

and designer at Baer Animation. His career in Japan spanned nearly 35 years and includes working at Osamu Tezuka's Mushi Productions on *Astro Boy*. He also worked at Sanrio (in Tokyo and Los Angeles) and Toei Animation, before establishing his own company, Raku-Kobu, an animation and merchandizing company in Tokyo, in 1989.

The following is based on my conversation with Miyasan, with Willie Ito, another friend of Renzo and a colleague at Disney, acting as translator. Miyasan said he had "many, many memories of Renzo," and here are some of the ones he shared with me.

He was quite famous in Japan, not for his own films, but for the work he did on a 90 minute TV show back around 1965 called Geba Geba.

We were both from the Osaka area and started at the same time at a little animation studio there where we were in training together. Renzo sat in front of me and he looked older; I thought he was a veteran animator and was thus a little shy about approaching him.



Kinoshita's *The Last Air Raid Kumagaya* (1993).

Meanwhile, Renzo looked back at me and thought *I was* an old veteran, and was also a little reticent about striking up a conversation. And that, basically is how our friendship began.

Eventually, I moved to Tokyo and started working for Mushi Productions. Then, lo and behold, Renzo came there and started working there at the studio, where we both worked on *Astro Boy* as animators.

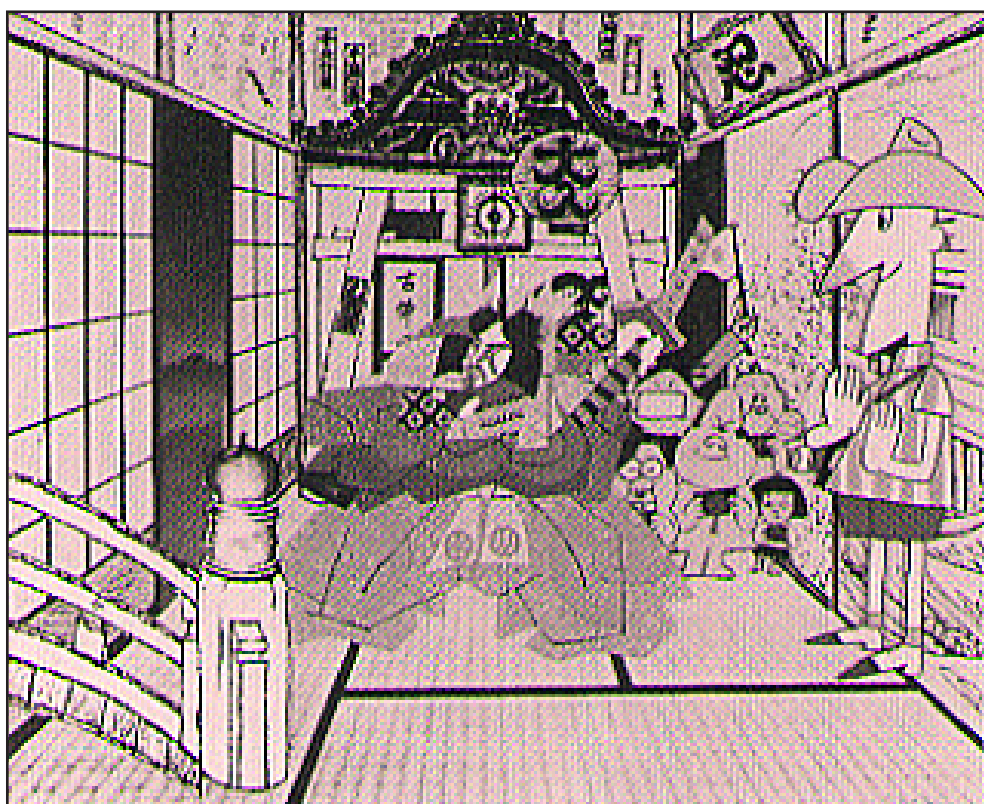
There are some funny little anecdotes I could tell about when we were a bunch of young guys working together, raising hell and doing all sorts of funny things. Renzo was a little cheap about going to the barber shop. Back then, believe it or not, he had a lot of hair and I had an Elvis Presley. Renzo asked me if I could give him a trim. So, I took a pair of paper scissors and started to trim his hair. It was kind of uneven, so I cut a little bit more. There were a bunch other guys working in the place and one of them said, "Let me have a hand at it now." Eventually, they all got in on it and pretty soon his hair was a total mess, short here and long there. In the end, he was forced to go

to a barber shop and have it corrected. But, of course, the barber cut everything to match the short part. So, when he came back to the office, he was almost bald. The irony of it all is that it never really grew back to its fullest. So, the way we all remember Renzo, with his bald head was the result of us fooling around and giving him this haircut.

There was another animator, who would go out and raise hell with me and Renzo. But I was the one who would have to watch their sake drinking to make sure these two guys didn't get into any trouble. This all happened, of course, before Renzo was married to Sayokosan.

After about a year at Mushi Productions, Renzo left and got into making his own films, while I stayed on doing TV series and feature films. Renzo met Sayoko at Mushi, where she was sort of a secretary to an executive. She had gone to art school and hung out with our crowd. That's how they met. About three years later, after he started his own studio, they got married.

Renzo had a unique style, and I remember when I became one of the premiere animators in Japan and had had the chance to evaluate a lot of artist portfolios. But when I would see Renzo's work, I



Kinoshita's *Made in Japan* (1972).

got the feeling that if they were for sale, they would be worth buying, they were that good.

Renzo was quite involved with the independent filmmaking movement and ASIFA, but I was not closely in touch to talk about these things. However, I vividly remember when he and Sayokosan were the motivating force to get the Hiroshima Festival off and running. Sayoko was always very much involved in the creative part of it. She would go out and really promote a lot of their travels to ASIFA events, which they always did together.

He was quite famous in Japan, not for his own films, but for the work he did on a 90 minute TV show back around 1965 called *Geba Geba*. He did brief, five second spots, with a character spaced throughout the show called Geba Geba Ozisan (Uncle Geba Geba.) which they blended optically with a live-action comedian and they would banter back-and-forth. And that was a very popular character for Renzo.

But Renzo's main focus was his own little films and documentaries. But to make money in order to keep these films in production, he would make commercials to subsidize his independent films. His company was always a two man studio. It was him and Sayokosan. He would hire people like me to come in and help him out on a film, but he never had like a full-time crew. Renzo was essentially the art crew, while Sayokosan would do the ink and paint and background.

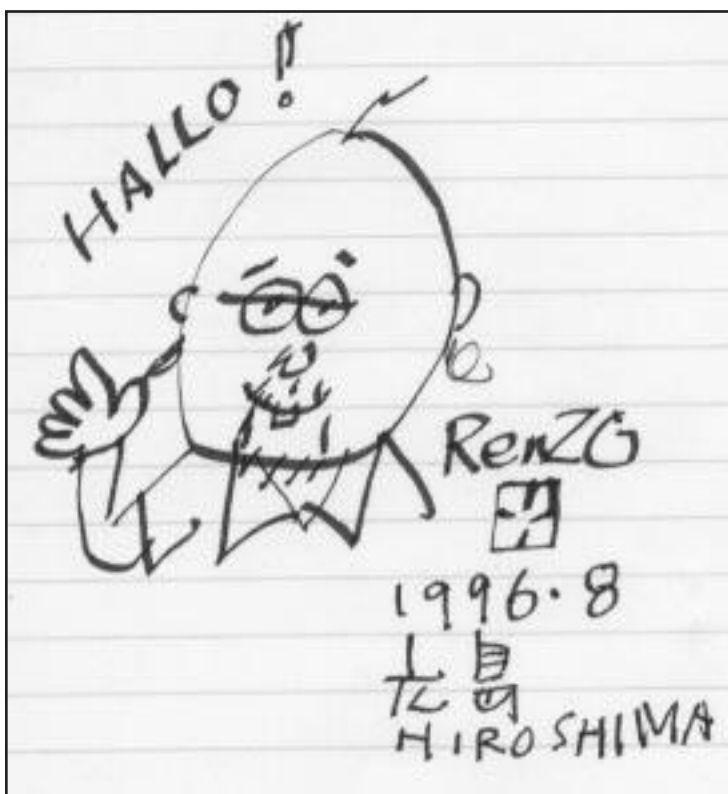
Among his tight circle of friends, there are some very famous illustrators who all kind of learned together. Renzo could always depend on them to come in and help them out on a film. So, he was able to get the best designers and illustrators and all that. He was very dedicated in making his films and developing

animators, we would always discuss what we're working on, what are our new ideas. But that was one film that we never actually talked about. If we did talk about it, I would have described it vividly, because as an animator you're able to describe things that way. But in spite of that, Renzo captured it all.

When we were students and learning the craft, we would talk for hours about American animation. We always spoke of how someday we would come to the United States and work in the animation business there, which I eventually did. I would write letters and at Christmas we would exchange cards, where I would say, "Come on, when are you ready to come to America and work here?" And he would say, "I would love to, but you know how much I like apple pie. Do you have a good recipe for apple pie?" So, I said, "My wife makes wonderful apple pies, so if you come you can have all you want." And that was the

very last note I sent to him in my last Christmas card I sent him. In that note, I also said, "I will be coming back to Japan in May, so we will get together and we'll talk more about American animation."

I heard the news of his death from a friend we both worked with in Osaka, who sent me the obituary in an Osaka newspaper. It's rather poignant that we ended up talking about apple pies and American animation.



Renzo's autograph from Hiroshima 96 to our own Wendy Jackson.

his craft, and he was very proud of it, but in a low key sort of way.

It's ironic about the film he made about Hiroshima and the A-bomb. You see, I was born in Hiroshima and experienced the bombing as a child and saw the mushroom cloud. I never talked about what I saw or experienced to Renzo, but what he depicted in his film was so true to life: the bomber flying over, the blue sky, and the smokey part; I was just absolutely flabbergasted at how real Renzo's image was; it was exactly like what I actually saw.

It was funny, because as fellow

Remembering Al

by Mark Mayerson

Animator Alfred Eugster, whose career started in the silent era and ended doing animation for TV, passed away the night of January 1, 1997 at the age of 87. The following memoir and biofilmography was prepared by his friend and sometime colleague, Mark Mayerson.

I first met Al in 1975 when I was researching an article on cartoons released by MGM when he let me interview him about the Iwerks studio.

When I went up to Kim and Gifford, I had no idea what to expect. Al was 66 at the time, and I guess I expected to see a balding, white-haired old man. Instead, I saw someone who could have been in his 50s. He had a full head of brown hair and an upright posture and he energetically waved me into his office and answered all my questions, and even lent me a staff photo of the Iwerks studio.

In 1976, I had finished school and started working in film as a production assistant at J.C. Productions, one of the many small commercial houses in New York. At the same time, I was animating as a hobby and was able to use the studio's facilities to shoot my animation on 16mm. I showed it to Al and asked him if he thought I was good enough to work professionally in animation. He told me I was. Coming from someone who had worked for Disney and

Fleischer, his opinion meant a lot to me. Shortly after that, I took my first animation job at Teletactics.

I worked with Al on two occasions. In January 1978, I helped out



Eugster in a detail from his class graduation picture from Cooper Union in 1932. Photo courtesy of Harvey Deneroff.

on the *Science Rock* episode about gravity. It was a short freelance assignment, and I always thought that I got the job out of pity. Al knew I wasn't working steadily and I believe he convinced Kim and Gifford that he needed help hitting a deadline. The second time was from May until October 1980. Kim and Gifford was doing the TV series *Drawing Power*, created by George Newall and Tom Yohe, the people behind the *Schoolhouse Rock* series.

It's All Production

The studio's work was very flat in design and limited in animation, but Al was an expert at breaking up a

character into separate cel levels to keep it alive. His work was far superior to anyone else's on the series and his exposure sheets were an education.

Al gave every scene his full attention. He never felt superior to the material or hacked something out to get it off his desk. Within the limitations of budget and schedule, he worked hard to get the maximum entertainment out of every scene.

I hadn't been animating for many years, and the show was being made without pencil tests. If I was having a problem with one of my scenes, Al would always take time to help me out with it. "It's all production," he would say, meaning that it was as good a use of his time as his own work.

Coming from someone who had worked for Disney and Fleischer, his opinion meant a lot to me.

Al was very regular in his habits. I've heard stories that people could tell time by when he lit up his cigars. He kept all his papers meticulously filed, and anything he wasn't sure how to classify he put in a file marked "limbo."

Al Eugster was always generous in helping people professionally. Assistant animator Ed Cerullo told me that when he worked with him in the 1950s, Al gave him opportunities



Left to right: Otto Englander, Shamus Culhane, and Al Eugster at Disney in 1935. From Shamus Culhane's *Talking Animals and Other People* (St. Martin's Press, 1986). Collection of Bernie Wolf.

to animate. Joe Funaro, who worked at Famous Studios before entering the priesthood, remembered Al fondly in an article that appeared in the *New York Daily News*.

A Very Private Man

After *Drawing Power*, I moved to Toronto and kept in touch with Al mostly by phone and mail for the next 12 years. I have to admit that our conversations grew awkward after he retired. We didn't have a whole lot in common except animation and I'm sorry to say that I let our contact lapse in 1992.

In 1996, Bill Lorenzo threw a memorial tribute to Shamus Culhane, and mentioned that Al's wife had passed away and that he was in a retirement home and gave me his address. I wrote to him, but many weeks went by without a reply, so I called the retirement home. I had no idea what condition Al was in, so I was afraid that he might be too ill to communicate. I was told he was okay and I phoned him directly and reestablished contact. I called him regularly after that and visited him twice, in October and on December 28, just days before he died. During the first visit I gave him a copy of the new book on the *Schoolhouse Rock* series,

and the last visit I gave him a copy of David Gersteins Felix book, *Nine Lives to Live*. While I got it backwards, I'd given Al material that reflected the start and end of his career.

Al had definitely aged since I had last seen him. He had heart trouble and failing eyesight. He had given up his cigars due to doctors orders. He was bent over and moved very slowly. He also had lost strength in his hands and complained that some books were too heavy to hold. Because of his eyesight, reading and writing were difficult. When I found this out I communicated with him by phone. I'd always call him Sunday nights and he'd always be watching *60 Minutes*. He got a kick out of Andy Rooney, so I timed my calls so they ended well before Rooney's segment.

He never felt superior to the material or hacked something out to get it off his desk. Within the limitations of budget and schedule, he worked hard to get the maximum entertainment out of every scene.

While Al was very pleasant and easy to talk to, he was a very private man. It was only in the last year that I learned that he had no children. I started asking him questions about his background. While he'd answer them, he wouldn't volunteer any extra information. I found out that his father played the French horn with John Phillip Sousa and Toscanini. His father died young, in his 40s, but Al did not give a cause of death. I

also found out that he had a brother who worked as a soundman in the New York film industry. After Al's death, his niece told me that Al also had a sister and a half brother and half sister. Over the years Al had dropped various bits of information, such as ghosting at least one Felix Sunday comic strip page for Otto Messmer or the fact that he'd done comic book work under the name Eugie. He also told me that his first Fleischer animation was not *Swing You Sinners*, but an industrial film made for Westinghouse. Al may have meant *Finding His Voice* made for Western Electric, but I'm not sure.

I was shocked to hear of Al's death. He seemed the same in December as he had when I saw him in October and he was scheduled to have cataract surgery on January 8.

Al was the first veteran animator I ever met, and one of the nicest. He was genuinely interested in helping me out and took an interest in what I was doing. I'm really, really going to miss him.

Al Eugster (1909-1997): An Annotated Biofilmography

(The filmography proper for Eugster's theatrical films was compiled in collaboration with Dave Mackey and remains incomplete—Mark Mayerson.)

Al Eugster was born on February 11, 1909 and began his animation career in 1925 at the Pat Sullivan studio, working for Otto Messmer on the Felix the Cat series. His first job there was blackening in drawings of Felix. While at Sullivan, he attended Cooper Union at night to study art.

Fleischer Studios

In 1929, Al moved over to the Fleischer Studios, where he did his first animation.

Swing You Sinners (1930; Talkartoon)
Strike Up the Band (1930; Screen Song). Eugster was the sole animator.

Sky Scraping (1930; Talkartoon)
The Grand Uproar (1930; Talkartoon)
The Bum Bandit (1931; Talkartoon)
Russian Lullabye (1931; Screen Song)

A-Hunting We Will Go (1932; Talkartoon with Betty Boop)
Stopping the Show (1932; Betty Boop). Al remembered animating Betty Boop imitating Maurice Chevalier and Fanny Brice.

Mintz Studio

In 1932, Al went West to work for Mintz on Krazy Kat cartoons, where he was teamed with Preston Blair on many films.

Lighthouse Keeping (1932; Krazy Kat)
Prosperity Blues (1932; Krazy Kat)
The Minstrel Show (1932; Krazy Kat)
Wedding Bells (1933; Krazy Kat)
Wooden Shoes (1933; Krazy Kat)
Bunnies and Bonnets (1933; Krazy Kat)

Antique Antics (1933; Krazy Kat)
Whacks Museum (1933; Krazy Kat)

Eugster is credited as co-writer, not animator.

Ub Iwerks

Al worked here from May of 1933 to 1935, where he co-animated several ComiColor shorts with Shamus Culhane.

Jack and the Beanstalk (1933; ComiColor)
The Little Red Hen (1934; ComiColor)
The Brave Tin Soldier (1934; ComiColor)
Puss in Boots (1934; ComiColor)
The Queen of Hearts (1934;



Hawaiian Holiday (Disney, 1937) featured Eugster's animation of Donald doing the hula.

Disney

He joined Disney in 1935 and became a Duck man as well as working on *Snow White*.

Moving Day (1936; Mickey, Donald and Goofy)

Hawaiian Holiday (1937; Mickey, Donald and Goofy). Eugster animated Donald doing the hula.

Clock Cleaners (1937; Mickey, Donald and Goofy). Eugster animated the the sequence of Donald on the mainspring, as well as the final shot of Mickey, Donald and Goofy doing the shimmy.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937; feature). Most of Al's work was on the bed building sequence, which was cut, but one of his remaining shots includes birds and animals pulling on Dopey's robe to warn him that Snow White is in trouble.

Fleischer Studios (Miami)

Al rejoined Fleischer to work on *Gulliver's Travels* in Miami and stayed at the studio until 1943, when he went into the army. During his stay, he had a chance to work Shamus

Gulliver's Travels (1939; feature). Eugster did work on Gabby, including a shot where Gabby and King Little are covered with stones on the balcony near the start of the film.

A Kick in Time (1940; Color Classic)

Way Back When a Razzberry Was a Fruit (1940; Stone Age)
Popeye Meets Willian Tell (1940; Popeye)

The Dandy Lion (1940; Animated Antics)

Two for the Zoo (1941; Gabby)
Baby Wants a Bottleship (1942; Popeye)

A Hull of a Mess (1942; Popeye)
Mr. Bug Goes to Town (1942; feature). Eugster animated Mr. Beetle, Swat and Smack. One scene that's his is where Swat and Smack are dancing in imitation of Hoppity and Honey. Al originally animated the dancing to be faster, but Dave Fleischer told him that it would be sexier if he slowed it down.

Famous Studios

In 1945, Al joined Famous as a head animator and stayed until 1957. He worked on a lot of Screen Songs and Popeye cartoons, as well as Little Audrey and the Noveltoons.

The Enchanted Square (1947; Noveltoon)

The Wee Men (1947; Noveltoon)
Naughty But Mice (1947; Noveltoon)

The Baby Sitter (1947; Little Lulu)

Butterscotch and Soda (1948; Little Audrey). An an interesting parody of Billy Wilder's *Lost Weekend*.

Sing or Swim (1948; Screen Song)

Camptown Races (1948; Screen Song)
Spinach Vs. Hamburgers (1948; Popeye)
Readin', Ritin', and Rhythmic (1948; Screen Song)
Winter Draws On (1948; Screen Song)
The Emerald Isle (1949; Screen Song)
Stork Market (1949; Screen Song)
Hot Air Aces (1949; Popeye)
Farm Foolery (1949; Screen Song)
Our Funny Finny Friends (1949; Screen Song)
Win, Place And Showboat (1950; Screen Song)
Gobs Of Fun (1950; Screen Song)
Lunch With A Punch (1952; Popeye)
Fun At The Fair (1952; Kartune)
Friend Or Phony (1952; Popeye)
Shuteye Popeye (1952; Popeye)
Hysterical History (1953; Kartune)
Ancient Fistory (1953; Popeye)
Baby Wants A Battle (1953; Popeye)
Popeye, The Ace of Space (1953; Popeye) Made in 3D.
Crazytown (1954; Noveltoon)
Popeye's 20th Anniversary (1954; Popeye)
Mister And Mistletoe (1955; Popeye)
Assault And Flattery (1956; Popeye)
Parlez Vous Woo (1956; Popeye)
A Haul In One (1956; Popeye)
The Crystal Brawl (1957; Popeye)
Dante Dreamer (1958; Noveltoon).

Features a Little Nemo-like character.

After Famous, Al freelanced for various commercial studios in New York, including Anim Cent. He also worked on the Joe Oriolo *Felix the Cat* TV cartoons.

Paramount

In 1964, he rejoined Paramount, working under Shamus Culhane and Ralph Bakshi before the studio closed in 1967.

The Story of George Washington

(1965; Noveltoon)
Poor Little Witch Girl (1965; Noveltoon)
Shoeflies (1965; Honey Halfwitch)
Baggin' The Dragon (1966; Honey Halfwitch)
A Balmy Knight (1966; Modern Madcap)
The Defiant Giant (1966; Honey Halfwitch)
Potions And Notions (1966; Honey Halfwitch)
A Wedding Knight (1966; Modern Madcap)
The Blacksheep Blacksmith (1967; Modern Madcap)
Think Or Sink (1967; Merry Maker)
My Daddy the Astronaut (1967; Fractured Fable). Shamus Culhane's highly praised film done in the style of childrens drawings.
The Squaw-Path (1967; Go-Go Toon)
The Stuck-Up Wolf (1967; Fractured Fable)
The Opera Caper (1967; Go-Go Toon)
The Fuz (1967; Fractured Fable)
The Mini-Squirts (1967; Fractured Fable)
Marvin Digs (1967; Go-Go Toon)
Mouse Trek (1967; Fractured Fable)

Kim and Gifford

Al joined Kim and Gifford in 1968. Ironically, at a time when the animation business rarely offered full-time employment, he began his longest uninterrupted stay at a single studio. Kim and Gifford did commercial work and also the *Science Rock* series, which is still being rerun on ABC. Al animated *Science Rock* segments on gravity, bones and the nervous system, among others. In 1978, he did intersititals for NBC's Saturday morning lineup, based on the theme Saturday Morning Fever. In 1980, Kim and Gifford produced work for *Drawing Power*, a live-action and ani-

ated Saturday morning series for NBC. Al animated all the Professor Rutabaga segments. (Rutabaga was a carnival pitchman who extolled the virtues of fruits and vegetables.) During much of this time, Al worked without an assistant or inbetweener and did all the pencil artwork himself.

Eugster made perhaps his sole



Shamus Culhane's *My Daddy the Astronaut* (Famous Studios, 1966), designed by Gil Miret and animated by Al Eugster. From Shamus Culhane's *Talking Animals and Other People* (St. Martin's Press, 1986).

on camera appearance in John Canemakers' documentary *Otto Messmer and Felix the Cat*.

He retired from Kim and Gifford and animation in September of 1987, ending a 62 year career.

In 1995, Al's wife Hazel, known as Chick, passed away, ending a marriage of 61 years. They had no children. He is survived by a niece, Joan Bell and a half-brother, Charles.

Mark Mayerson works for Catapult Productions in Toronto.

He recently directed and co-wrote Monster By Mistake, a computer animated half hour TV special that ran on Canada's YTV. Mark can be reached by email at mayerson@SIDEFX.COM.



NATPE '97: The Buzz of the Biz!

by Susan Hornik

At the National Association of Television Programming Executives (NATPE) convention last month, key television executives from around the world congregated in New Orleans to wheel, deal and negotiate. And one trend was clear: animation is the hottest ticket in town! Kids shows, adult satires, feature films and even network logos have all gone to the toons!

DIC Entertainments' Robby London feels that the animated market is quite competitive, noting that, "producers are obliged to take any action to make their project stand out from the crowd." To that end, DIC's show is *Mummies*, a half hour weekly series which is being executive produced by Ivan Reitman of *Ghostbusters* fame.

"Animation is a unique art form with its own reason for being," said Sachs Entertainments' Barbara Schwecke. Right now, she sees the surge being led by the major studios and their decision to build their own animation facilities. While at NATPE, Sachs wanted to sell a third season of *Bananas in Pajamas*, which is being reformatted to 15 minutes and paired with a Random House show, *The Crayon Box*. Sachs' half hour weeklies, *New Adventures of Zorro* and *Kewpie* have been sold to WPIX/New York.



Sky Dancers (Abrams/Gentile & Gaumont), based on the popular girl's toy.

E is for Education!

Many syndicators with kids product stressed the unlimited possibilities of animation can adequately blend with the limitations of Federal Communications Commission guidelines. Summit Media Groups Shelly Hirsch feels that "FCC-friendly doesn't necessarily mean standing in front of a desk. The intention is to inform and educate—and animation is a tool." Summit was at NATPE with the youth-appealing, FCC-friendly *Mr. Men*, *Oscar's Orchestra* (part of Summit's "Just 4 Kids" weekly 90-minute program

block, that also includes classic stories called *Enchanted Tales*) and the new adult weekly from Japan, *Sushi TV*.

Bohbot Entertainments' Karen Lee Brown feels that US producers need to tone down the violence if they want to strike pay dirt in international markets, which is why they are offering the new weekly kids show, *Dangerous Dinosaurs*. While there's "enough action to intrigue kids, the heroes usually don't want to use weapons." Instead, Brown has opted for what she terms "nonimitative violent action," with plenty of tail-thrashing and growling, but few guns.

MG/Perin has had a lot of success with their first foray into animation. "We've had an excellent response from our stations to our new fully animated educational series, *Chucklewood Critters*." The show, which is currently in production, has been sold to the BBC as well as to stations in the US.

Co-Production Land

Animation is also very big in international markets. "There is a lot of demand—more than we can produce," explained Claude Berthier, chief executive officer of Marina Productions, who was at the conference to promote *The Princess of the Nile*, an FCC-friendly series



Red Raven, Phoenix Animation's new show which is being developed in association with the Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

set in ancient Egypt.

Since their introduction, Gaumont Multimédias highly successful *Dragon Flyz* and *Sky Dancers* (both produced by Abrams/Gentile Entertainment) have sold in over 70 territories worldwide. The series, developed from the number one selling toys in the USA, have recently been sold to RCTI in Indonesia, and *Dragon Flyz* has gone to Fox Kids Network in the UK. Gaumont's Mickie Steinmann was also excited that the company had just sold *Home to Rent*, which already airs in France and the UK, to air on Fox's Saturday morning lineup. Rock star Iggy Pop is working on the theme music for the show. Gaumont has also entered into the enchanting world of magic with its latest animated series, *The Magician*.

Many of the companies exhibiting at NATPE have established co-productions with a number of different countries. For instance, Alliance Communications offered the new animated series, *Captain Star*. The cult comic strip hero will be flying onto the small screen in a

co-venture between Filmworks (UK), HTV's Harvest Entertainment (UK), Alliance Communications Corporation (Canada), ZDF (Germany), Nickelodeon (UK) and Canal Plus (Spain). Other financiers include YLE (Finland) and VPRO (Holland). In addition, Alliance brought a third season of *Reboot* and another season of *Beast Wars*, (which is distributed by Claster Television), two high-tech computer-generated animation series produced by Alliance and Mainframe.

Catalyst Entertainment teamed with co-owned Phoenix Animation Studios, CanWest Global System and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation on *Red Raven*, a new FCC-friendly half hour animated series for fall 1998. The program is based on the comic book and chronicles the adventures of Lynx, a Cree warrior who can transform himself into a supernatural hero.

Many syndicators with kids product stressed the unlimited possibilities of animation can adequately blend with the limitations of Federal Communications Commission guidelines.

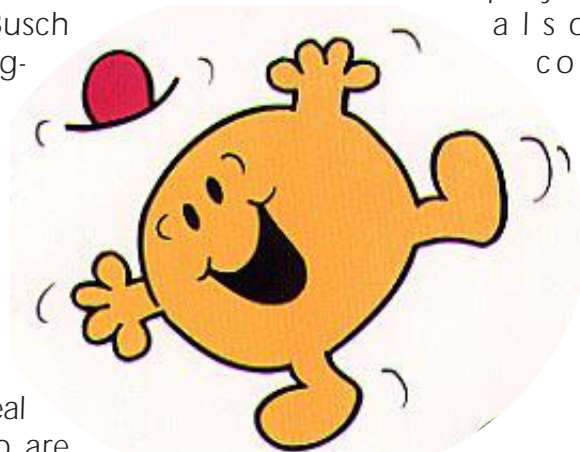
One of the most beloved characters from the early world of children's television is returning this fall through an agreement between Saban Entertainment and Busch Entertainment. Captain Kangaroo will be back as the *All-New Captain Kangaroo* to highlight the Saban's Kids Network. The FCC-friendly show will be an updated, contemporary version of the old standard, but enough of the classic elements will be retained to appeal to the original viewers who are today's moms and dads.

Stay Tooned!

The following NATPE items highlight the convention's animated news bites:

- From the start of NATPE's opening session, the innovative use of animation techniques were present, when Medialabs unveiled Cleo, a real-time motion capture animated character who "starred" in their 3-D performance animation presentation.
- Montreal-based Telescene Film Group is the producer for *Student Bodies*, an FCC-friendly live action/animation series set in high school where kids work on an alternative student publication, which is being distributed by Twentieth Television. The show is scheduled to premiere in syndicated television in the fall of 1997.
- Nelvana had two animated properties at the conference: *Ned's Newt* and *Sticking Around*, a half hour series that will be seen this fall. *Sticking Around*, created by Robin Steele and Brianne Leary, was adapted from a series of shorts which originally ran on MTV's *Liquid Television*. The company is

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Mr. Happy from Summit Media Group's Mr. Men

producing with Medialab on *Donkey Kong Country*. In addition, Scholastic's *The Magic School Bus*, the animated series produced by Scholastic Productions in association with Nelvana, has been licensed to approximately 80 countries around the world, including the UK, France, Spain, Greece, and several countries within the Middle East and Latin America.

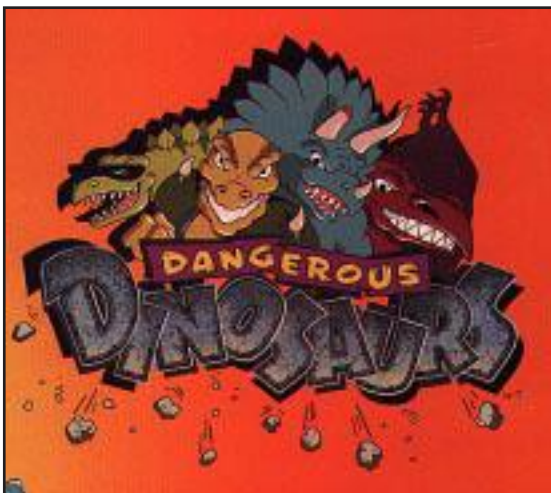


Encore Enterprise's *Chucklewood Critters*.

seen through the poetic eyes of a curious young robot, Mirob, and his three friends, Mimi, Pyra and Cric-Crac. *The Adventures of Professor Iris*, which consists of 52 x 13 minute vignettes, is based on the Professor Iris character from the puppet series for preschoolers, *Iris, The Happy Professor*.

- Desclez Productions announced that the company is in pre-production on three new animated children's series, *Turtle Island*, *Mirob* and *The Adventures of Professor Iris*. Produced by Desclez Productions in association with Ravensburger, *Turtle Island* is a 26 episode, 30 minute series which centers around a group of hilarious characters in the South Seas whose life is constantly interrupted by pirates and buccaneer in search of gold and jewels. Designed for children and family audiences, *Turtle Island* features a turtle king, a duckbill platypus and an octopus beast. *Mirob* consists of 26, five-minute, 3D-animated vignettes that introduce preschoolers to a range of experiences of nature

- Claster Television offered 13 all-new first-run episodes for a second season of *All Dogs Go To Heaven: The Series*.
- Malofilm International, the international distribution arm of Malofilm Communications, will handle sales and worldwide distribution for the children's animated series *Turtle Island*.
- Fresh on the heels of the success of its *Animated Classics* collections, Goodtimes Entertainment offered its new animated series *The Greatest Heroes and Legends of the Bible*, designed for family time periods and mass market video sell-through to buyers worldwide. The series has already been sold to broadcasters in numerous territories throughout the world, including Italy, Spain and Germany.



Bohbot's *Dangerous Dinosaurs*.

call to find broadcast partners to participate as charter members of the International Animation Consortium for Child Rights. The initiative is to find broadcast time for the 100 public service announcements (PSAs) on children's rights issues currently being produced by more than 80 animation studios worldwide.

"We're hoping that as the issue of broadcasters' responsibility to children becomes an increasingly topical one, networks will see this as a way of showing their support for positive kids programming," said William Hetzer, chief of UNICEF's Broadcast and Electronic Communication Section. The 30 second PSAs are being donated to UNICEF by the producers and will be distributed to broadcasters for free. Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, RAI Television and YLE-TV Finland are among the broadcasters already committed to the program.

- NATPE announced that Disney Television Animation, Apple Computer and IBM are the latest additions to the list of leading-edge companies to exhibit at the first annual international NATPE Animation and Special Effects (ANIFX) Conference & Exposition, May 8-11 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Susan L. Hornik
(slh2346@aol.com) is a freelance writer/editor in the television/film industry. At NATPE, she is the editor of *The Daily Express*, a convention daily magazine.

- UNICEF is putting out the



Heard at NATPE 97

by Wendy Jackson

At the 1997 Convention and Conference of the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE), our reporter on the scene, asked animation distributors: "What are some of the considerations involved in developing, producing, and ultimately distributing animation to the international market?" Herein are a selection of answers followed by some comments drawn from a panel discussion "Animation: The Universal Language," moderated by Cartoon Network President Betty Cohen, which discussed the realities of the much-hyped global marketplace for animation.

Joel Andryc, Senior Vice President of Development, Saban Entertainment, says he looks for properties that "transcend cultural boundaries" by having evergreen appeal, or universal animal characters, citing as examples the Saban shows *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* based on the classic literature of Charles Dickens, and *20,000 Leagues in Outer Space* a modern adaptation of the Jules Verne classic. "Most importantly," adds Andryc "a show has to have compelling characters and stories. If you don't have those elements, you have a

show that won't entertain and won't sell internationally or domestically." Andryc attributes the success of Saban as a global company to the vision of its founder, noting that, "Ten years ago, when most production companies were developing only for the US market, Haim Saban had the foresight to be international in scope and predict today's global economy. As you can see here at NATPE, the world really has become one market."

Nadia Nardonnnet, Executive Vice President of Bohbot International discussed some of the challenges involved in pro-

ducing animation for an international audience: "Bohbot distributes product in over 55 countries, and animation is *the* product that sells well internationally, having the most transferable cultural content. But the international market is a very complex market, and their demands are often contradictory. They want an animation series that has notoriety, yet at the same time they want something new. They want non-violence, but they also want action. They want ratings as well as educational content. You have to balance all of these issues in developing animation product for the international market."

Linda Simensky, recently appointed **Vice President of Original Animation for the Cartoon Network** responded: "If I thought about what every different Cartoon Network wanted, it would be difficult because everybody wants something else. In Asia, they like family-oriented shows, in some places they only like funny animals, and in other places they like sarcasm. What I really try to do is to just not make shows feel too American. I look for the universal gag, the universal sense of humor. I think the reason slapstick works is because it's funny everywhere. Whatever



Joel Andryc, Saban's Senior Vice President of Development.

motivates the characters should not be specific to American life. I try to stay away from American jokes, although I'm seeing a lot more of them now. Why not just come up with some human personality traits that are universal?"

Nancy Steingard, Executive Vice President of Universal Cartoon Studio, noted that "a big focus of what Universal is trying to do is to capitalize on our franchise properties." She attributes the international success of their animated show *Casper*, to its quality and the fact that the property is already established, having gained wide recognition with the recent feature film. Additionally, she points out that the international market is very receptive to comedy. Anticipating international success for one of the new shows in development at Universal, Steingard said "*Woody Woodpecker* is a property that we have on the drawing board right now, and it has already been very big in the international market. We have a lot of great plans on the drawing board for Woody for the upcoming year, and we have some really amazing talent working on it."

In a good co-production, one plus one equals three.

On the second day of the conference, NATPE presented a panel discussion entitled "Animation: The Universal Language". With Cartoon Network President Betty Cohen moderating, panelists discussed the realities of the much-hyped global marketplace for animation.

Michel Welter of Saban Enterprises International, one

of the panelists on the "Animation: The Universal Language," pointed out that the so-called global marketplace for animation consists mostly of American shows traveling world-



Nancy Steingard, Executive Vice President, Universal Cartoon Studios.

wide, not the other way around. He noted that, "Out of the 125 new shows which were produced and shown in the United States in 1995-96, only 17 of them originated from another country. Fourteen of those 17 were from Canada and the 3 others were from Gaumont in France, who had a co-production agreement with a Hollywood studio. The only way to get a European concept produced and shown in America is either to practically sell your concept to an American company that's going to change it, or to go through Canada, which has a unique position to understand both the US and Europe."

Nelvana is one Canadian company which is very familiar with European co-productions created for the US market.

Chairman Michael Hirsh, in the course of the panel discussion, described the company's unique positioning in the marketplace: "Nelvana has been very successful in producing European projects with a more North American spirit, which then allows them to travel. We have a proximity to the US market, so we understand the culture. At the same time, Canada has a heritage that is a little more European, so we can appreciate where our European partners are coming from. Working with European companies, we've been able to take characters from one part of the world and adapt them so that they work all over the world. That marriage between Canadian and European companies also has another force behind it. Canada has official co-production treaties with those European companies. Producing these shows qualifies us for various incentive programs in Canada and also qualifies the European co-producers for incentive programs in those countries. The combination of those incentives, plus the license fees that we can get in our respective countries on presales allows us to produce those shows without any US presale. In a good co-production, one plus one equals three."

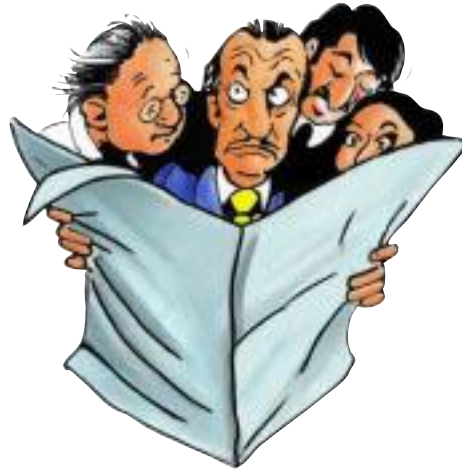
Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.



NEWS

Medialab Opens LA Studio.

French company Medialab, a subsidiary of Canal + has partnered with US company Four Media to form Medialab Studio LA, a joint venture which is one of the first real-time performance animation studios to open in Los Angeles. After making a big splash with presentations of their work at NATPE 97, the new studio hopes to secure production deals with Hollywood studios, continuing the kind of service work they have been providing for European companies since 1989. Their proprietary motion-capture animation system can produce up to 15 minutes of animation per day, and has already been put to use to produce original animated characters for European television, such as a 3-D Bugs Bunny for RAI-TV (Italy), Bert the Fish for Nickelodeon UK,



Donkey Kong for France 2's *Donkey Kong Country*, Digit for Belgacom (Belgium) for the and the virtual talk show host Cleo for Canal +, who is acting as the LA studio's spokesperson for promotions. In addition to their motion-capture technology, Medialab has produced 3D computer animation for TV series, commercials, and feature film effects, such as *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and *Insektors*.



Medialab's motion capture technology in action.



Nelvana's forthcoming *Donkey Kong Country*, made with Medialab's motion capture technology.

The giant international distributor of Japanese animation has opened a new Animated Shorts Division, which will be based in San Diego, and headed up by animation veteran Jan Cox, former producer of the *Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation* collections for Mellow Manor Productions. Beginning this fall, the division will distribute a series of full-length theatrical compilations of original animated shorts to be shown in theaters in the US and abroad. "Manga Entertainment is in the position to provide the best opportunity for animators of independently produced short films by enabling them to have their work seen in theaters worldwide by the general public," said Cox, who is now accepting submissions for review. Animators who wish to participate should contact Cox at 964 Fifth Ave, Suite 3300, San Diego, CA 92101 USA.

PDI Adopts New CG Application.

Northern California computer animation company Pacific Data Images recently adopted Platforms LSF (Load Sharing Facility) software for corporate-wide deployment. As the studio prepares for production on Dreamworks' feature-length computer animated film *Ants*, they recognized the need for a system to manage the workload among their cluster of several hundred computers. The LSF software maximizes time and computing power by distributing the workload of rendering and processing CG images across all of the computers in the network.

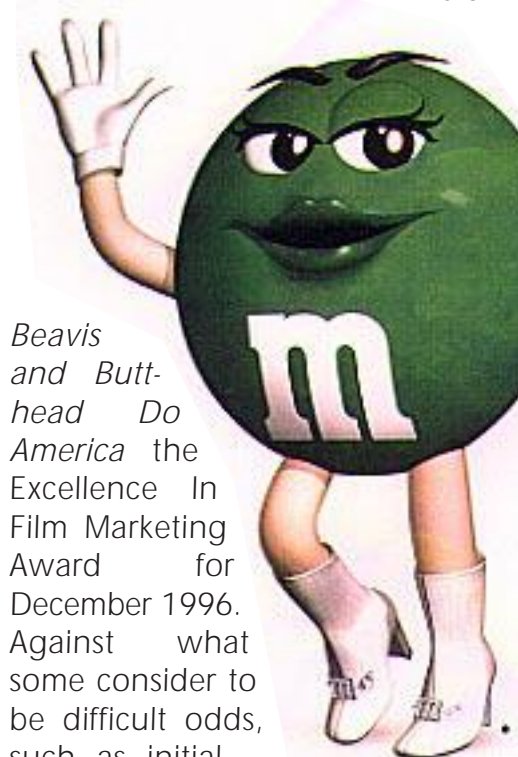
Manga Entertainment Launches New Animated Shorts Division

Hollywood Celebrates Departed Animators.

On February 1st, members of the animation community will gather in Hollywood's United Methodist Church in a non-denominational celebration to honor departed members of the animation community. The second annual "Afternoon of Remembrance" presented jointly by the MPSC Local 839 IATSE, ASIFA-Hollywood and Women In Animation will pay tribute to more than 32 people who died in 1996 and early 1997, including Saul Bass, Shamus Culhane, Al Eugster, Lillian Peel, Virgil Ross, and Clair Weeks. *Animation World Magazine* will publish a report from the event in next month's issue.

Beavis and Butt-head Win Marketing Award.

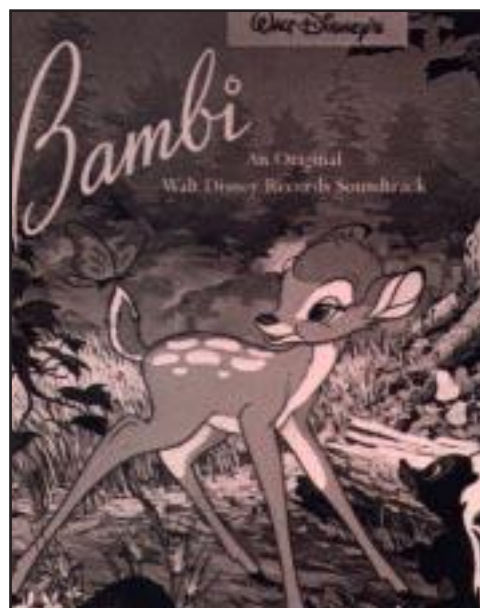
The Hollywood Film Information Council has awarded



Beavis and Butt-head Do America the Excellence In Film Marketing Award for December 1996. Against what some consider to be difficult odds, such as initial press resistance and having a

Green, Will Vinton Studio's first female M&M character!

teenage mentality film with "no promotable stars," the marketing team achieved tremendous box office success in the US, bringing in more than \$51 million so far. Creative promotion techniques such as actually



Soundtrack album cover from *Bambi*.

driving a painted Beavis and Butt-head bus across the country and airing pre-produced animated "interviews" with the characters on TV talk shows are acknowledged in the recognition of the award.

Disney to Release Limited Edition *Bambi* Home Video.

Walt Disney's fifth animated feature, *Bambi*, will be released on home video on February 4 as part of a 55th anniversary limited edition package, available for only 55 days. Contemporary Disney animators Dave Pruiksma, Doug Ball,

Mike Surrey and Ron Husband cite the film as being inspirational in their careers, featuring the contributions of several the legendary Nine Old Men animators who are still with us today, including Marc Davis, Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas.

DirecTV To Broadcast Manga Titles.

The Patlabor, *Angel Cop*, *The Guyver*, *Appleseed*, and *New Dominion Tank Police* are among the 30 Manga Entertainment Japanese animation titles to be offered on DirecTV's Direct Ticket Pay Per View satellite delivery service, beginning February 1.

Vinton Creates Female M&M Character.

There's a new face in Will Vinton Studios' most recent spots for the popular M&M/Mars ad campaign . . . Joining the familiar Blue, Red and Yellow M&M 3-D computer-animated brand characters is an all new Green character (yes, "Green" is her name), the first female M&M character to appear in the campaign. The first Green spots, entitled *Talk Show*, *Myth* and *Muscle Men* premiered during the

pre-game telecast on Fox prior to the Superbowl (January 26). Since



Colossal's *Pictogram* spot for Coca-Cola.

1995, Will Vinton Studio has created 16 commercials for M&M/Mars and BBDO Advertising.

Coca-Cola's Colossal Campaign.

San Francisco's Colossal Pictures is back in the swing of things with two new commercials for Coca-Cola, one in live-action and one using computer animation. The spots are Drew Takahashi's most recent projects since resuming his focus as the company's chief creative director. *Pictogram*, the 30 second spot done in 3D computer animation, was designed and directed by Jill Sprado, while the animation and compositing was produced by Click 3 West. *Pictogram* will air throughout 1997 in over 192 countries.

Curious Captures Cap'n Crunch.

In their sixth collaboration with Bayer Bess Vanderwarker, Curious Pictures presents a new 30 second spot for Cap'n Crunch Cereal using composited live-action, cel, and SGI computer generated images. The spot, entitled *Treehouse*, was directed by Steve Oakes and features a cel-animated Cap'n character as a roving reporter interviewing kids to get their reactions to the addition of blue and purple berries to Quakers' Crunch Berries cereal.



Sue Loughlin image for Weight Watcher's new ad campaign, produced by Acme Filmworks.

Weight Watchers Gets Animated. Acme Filmworks director Sue Loughlin created two 30 second spots now playing regularly on US national television. This campaign marks a new direction for the client, Weight Watchers, departing from spokesperson advertising for the season of increased business in the beginnings of the new year. Loughlin, creator of the festival-recognized short film *The Occasion*, has also created a series of three print ads as part of the overall campaign.

Bruce Willis to Star In Sony PlayStation Game. Shoot 'em up! Activision is currently producing *Apocalypse*, a new animated action-adventure game for the Sony PlayStation platform, featuring a "virtual" representation of Bruce Willis as a main character. Using cyber-scanning and motion-capture technologies, artists will create an entirely computer-generated 3D character based on Willis. This project will use Activision's new proprietary animation system and engine technology that they have been developing for two years. As part of his

multi-million dollar package, Willis received an equity interest in Activision and a profit participation in the title.

Kids' World First Game Stars Howie Mandel. Kids' World Entertainment, a division of 7th Level, has released its' first interactive CD-ROM title, *The Great Reading Adventure Starring Howie Mandel*. Designed for children ages 6 to 9, the animated educational title features the voices of Howie Mandel (*Bobby's World*) as Lil' Howie and Maurice LaMarche (*Pinky and the Brain*, *Yosemite Sam*) as Stinky the Skunk.

Living Books Releases New Arthur Game. Living Books, the San Francisco-based producer of interactive educational entertainment for children, has released a new interactive storybook based on the popular childrens book and PBS animated TV series *Arthur*. The product, entitled *Arthur's Reading Race* features animated characters in games designed to teach basic reading skills to 3-7 year old kids.

The following items are from AWN's January 21, 1997 Email News Flash:

California To Fund Education Initiative. After much pushing from Hollywood digital studios facing staffing crunches, California Governor Pete Wilson stated he will allot \$1.2 million of the states 1997-98 budget to fund scholarships for students pursuing careers in digital animation. The funds will be matched by a number of the animation and effects companies seeking talent. Additionally, Wilson recently unveiled the states Digital High School initiative, which will translate into \$1 billion in technology for California's high schools.

Ottawa To Present Student Animation Festival. North America's largest animation event, The Ottawa International Animation Festival announced plans to host a new biannual event, the International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa (SAFO). Executive Director Chris Robinson notes "Students should have an opportunity to have their work screened



Living Book's CD-ROM of *Arthur's Reading Room*.

more often and within a more supportive environment." SAFO will offer a showcase for the growing number of animated student films being produced, as well as spotlight animation schools and programs worldwide and offer professional workshops. To support the event, the Animarket trade fair introduced at Ottawa 96 will also take place at the new student festival, offering the talent-hungry studios and production companies an opportunity to get a peek at the industry's fresh crop of talent. The entry deadline for films in competition is July 1, 1997. For further information contact Chris Robinson at crobinso@docuweb.ca.

Animation Celebration To Include Business Conference.

The World Animation Celebration to be held in Pasadena, California March 24-30 recently announced details for its 1st International Business Conference of Television Animation. Twenty producers will be selected to give 10 minute presentations to all conference attendees, while another 10 producers will be chosen to present 5-minute videos at the breakfast symposium. Submissions are being accepted until February 15, 1997. For an application, contact Animation Celebration coordinators at animag@aol.com.

Absolut Vodka Launches Animation Web Site.

Christine Panushka, Associate Director of California Institute of the Arts' Experimental Animation Department is subject of and inspiration for *Absolut Panushka*, a new on-line image advertising campaign for Absolut Vodka. With Panushka's designs as the doorway and centerpiece, the web site (www.absolutvodka.com), officially launching

on Thursday, January 23, features additional artwork and animation clips by 24 international masters of animation, including Pritt Parn, Jules Engel, Kihachiro Kawamoto, Ruth Hayes, The DeNoojiers and others. Each animator was commissioned to create an original 10 second animated film including a visual of the signature Absolut bottle shape. The site is being promoted as an "on-line animation festival" with two of the films slated to premiere on the site each week. The films have already won a prize at the Holland Animation Film Festival (www.awn.com/haff) for Best Applied Animation Campaign, and are making their US debut at the Sundance Film Festival this week. Produced by Santa Monica, California-based production company, Troon, the site also features an animation history overview by film historian William Moritz and a Java-enabled page which allows users to create their own animation on-line. "Animation will be the art of the Internet" predicts Panushka, who believes the medium will bring animator and audience together.

PBS Builds HomeVideo Arm and Partners With WebTV.

On February 25, PBS' newly-formed division, PBS for Kids, will release its first home video product, a series of six tapes of *The Adventures From the Book of Virtues*, an animated series produced last year by PorchLight Entertainment. Meanwhile, PBS announced last week that they are partnering with WebTV Networks, Inc. to create customized on-line content for broadcast on WebTV's proprietary delivery mechanism, which allows users to access the Internet from their television set. The material will serve to promote PBS' TV shows, which can be viewed simultaneously through

WebTV's system. "Our goal is to cybercast fully integrated, extensive on-air programming and PBS On-line Web content to a whole new population of Internet users," noted PBS President and CEO Ervin Duggan at a press conference last week.

Fox Kids Network Confirms Plans To Launch Cable Network.

During the NATPE convention in New Orleans, Fox Kids Network CEO and Chairman Margaret Loesch met with broadcast affiliates to announce and discuss plans to launch a Fox Kids cable network aimed at rivaling existing networks, such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. Loesch is currently working on a business plan for the venture, targeting a September 1998 launch. Fox Kids Network is attempting to attract affiliate support in advance by offering to give them a 50% profit participation. Talks have already taken place between the network's parent News Corp. and International Family Entertainment about taking a partial stake in IFE's The Family Channel, which is already available in 65 million homes. Loesch also indicated that the company is considering turning their general entertainment cable channel, fX, into a children's service.

FOX's New Animated Show Is King.

Last week's Nielsen ratings showed that the premiere of Mike Judge's new animated series *King of the Hill* was watched by about 19.9 million viewers in the US, ranking it the top rated new show of the season and number 13 show of the week among total viewers. Just in front of *King* was *The Simpsons* which tallied in at number 12 with 20.4 million viewers, the shows' highest rating in 2 years.

Cartoon Network's Simensky Promoted / Program News.

Linda Simensky has been promoted from Director of Programming to Vice President of Original Animation for Cartoon Network Worldwide. Although the titles may not define the significance of the change, Linda told AWM that her new role will involve much more direct development work as part of the restructuring of the merged Turner/Time Warner company. Responsibilities will include overseeing development of and production for shows produced at Hanna Barbera Productions, notably drawing on her nine years of experience at Nickelodeon.

As president of ASIFA-East, as well as a frequent visitor to international animation festivals, Simensky has a strong knowledge of short-form animation, which she has put to good use in curating a new program for Cartoon Network, *O Canada*, a series of compilations of animated shorts produced by the world-renowned National Film Board of Canada. The weekly half hour program will air at 9:30 p.m. (ET) Wednesday evenings and repeat each Sunday at 10:30 p.m. (ET). Showcasing more than 50 films in all, the series will include 1986 Academy Award nominee *The Big Snit* by Richard Condie and the 1953 Oscar-winning *Neighbors* by Norman McLaren. "This collection was actually one of my programming goals when I started at Cartoon Network," notes Simensky. She is also responsible for programming another unique short film collection aired on the network: a collection of the annual winners of the ASIFA-East animation festival which happens in New York every spring.

In other programming slots, Cartoon Network is adding three

Kids WB! series to its Friday night lineup: *Steven Spielberg Presents Animaniacs*, *Superman*, and *Steven Spielberg Presents Pinky and the Brain*. This is just one of the many ways in which the merger of Time Warner and Turner is bringing synergy to animated programming. Cartoon Network president Betty Cohen commented that, "Now that we are a part of the Time Warner family, we will take advantage of every possible opportunity to promote the popularity of these classic and contemporary cartoon stars from both Warner Bros. and Hanna Barbera."

Curiously Animated Nick Logo.

Curious Pictures recently completed production of a dozen 3 and 4 second vignettes to serve as station identifications on the Nickelodeon cable network. Emmy-award winning director Mo Willems, known for his independent films and work on *Sesame Street*, directed the spots bringing to life the network's new computer-generated spokesperson Logobelly.

Ovitz Rich, Eisner Richer!

Michael Ovitz resigned from his post as president of Walt Disney Co. in December, taking home a whopping \$38.8 million in severance pay, plus stock options. This sum was reached after Disney was sued by a group of its stockholders for "waste of corporate assets."

Meanwhile, Walt Disney Co. chairman Michael Eisner just signed a new 10-year contract to stay with the company. Worth at least \$300 million, the deal assures that Eisner will be a billionaire by 2006. One has to wonder... what do these guys earn per minute?

Quibble Over Rocky & Bullwinkle Royalties.

Animator Ted Key has

filed a lawsuit against *Rocky & Bullwinkle* current rights holders Ward Productions. Key claims that Ward did not honor his end of the deal to share with him 25% of profits generated from all sales of the *Rocky & Bullwinkle* show to TV, home video or licensing the characters for other media projects. Meanwhile, in a separate federal court trial, the ownership of rights to the *Rocky & Bullwinkle* show is still under debate by MCA, Ward and General Mills.

Storyopolis Announces

Animated Projects.

Software billionaire Paul Allen's family entertainment company known as Storyopolis unveiled several new projects last week, including several animated TV shows and feature films. Projects in development are all based on illustrated children's books. For television, they plan to produce a series' with Saban Entertainment and one with DIC. The feature films in development are part of a first-look movie deal with Warner Bros., and they include adaptations of the books *Nicholas Cricket*, as well as *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, with Geena Davis as lead voice and co-producer, and *Red Ranger Came Calling* based on Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Berkely Breathed's recently completed screenplay, and *The Iguana Brothers*, a road movie starring iguanas for which modelmakers Mackinnon & Saunders are slated to participate in production.

Resident Evil To Become Feature

Film.

Capcom Co., the Japanese video game giant and creators of the Sony Play Station game *Resident Evil*, have announced plans to develop the game into a live-action feature film. The screenplay will be

written by Alan McElroy, writer of the *Spawn* comic book based film.

The following items are from AWN's January 7, 1997 Email News Flash:

Saban Going Dutch? Saban Entertainment is negotiating an agreement with Dutch media company Arcade NV to acquire a majority stake in the company's cable channel TV 10. This will likely mean an increase in animated programming for the channel, which is transmitted on 80% of Dutch cable systems. With Saban's recent formation of Fox Kids Worldwide with Fox Children's Network, pursuing interest in overseas cable operations fits into their overall plan to distribute their product on a global scale.

Scheimer in Deal With K-TEL.

Lou Scheimer Productions has entered into an exclusive output deal with K-Tel to acquire family films for international home video distribution. Lou Scheimer, long-time animation industry player and founder and former CEO of Filmation, notes that he will be looking for new properties at NATPE next week.

Curious Pictures Creates Best Buy Campaign.

Many of our US readers may have noticed the clever puppet-animated commercials for the Best Buy Company which aired over the holidays, and wondered who created them. The three 30 second spots; *Monsters*, *Wrestlers* and *Three Little Pigs* were created by Curious Pictures at their newly-opened San Francisco production facility. Director/ designer Denis Morella noted that the goal was to create a "Tex Avery/ Warner Bros. style animation, executed in 3D." Working with Morella on the spots were former Twitching Images staff,

Animation Director Paul Berry, Art Director Graham Maiden and Production Supervisor Kat Miller, best known for their work on *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *James and the Giant Peach*. (Berry, though, is perhaps best known for his short, *The Sandman*, which played on the festival circuit several years ago.)

Full Production Slate for Dreamquest Images.

The Walt Disney Company's visual effects division, Dreamquest Images recently announced that they are in production on seven feature films; *Mighty Joe Young*, *The Absent-Minded Professor*, *Con Air*, *George of the Jungle*, *Kundun*, *Jungle 2 Jungle* and *Deep Rising*. Dreamquest recently completed over 400 visual effects shots for the upcoming release *Honey, We Shrunk Ourselves*. Since being purchased by Disney in May '96, the studio's staff has effectively doubled to well over 200 employees, varying from project to project.

Disney Sets UK Video Sales Record.

The top-selling home video in the UK this year has been Disney's 1961 re-release of the animated *101 Dalmatians*, bringing the British home video sales market to a record high this year. Meanwhile, Disney's animated feature *Toy Story* home video sold more than 464,000 in the UK in November alone.

Role-Playing Games To Become Features.

Sweet Pea Entertainment, producers of Walt Disney Pictures' upcoming comic-book based feature, *GEN 13*, has acquired all rights to the popular futuristic sci-fi role-playing game *Traveler*. The company is now developing the property into TV and feature film concepts in collabora-

tion with Grand Design Entertainment. This and other projects in development by Sweet Pea will appeal to the virtually untapped literary market of role-playing game fans, for which there is an established audience of over 12 million players worldwide. Sweet Pea also owns rights to the popular *Dungeons & Dragons* role-playing game.

WB and Turner Synergy Begins.

The merger of Time-Warner and Turner is becoming a reality as we enter the new year, as we were reminded with the Warner Bros. Christmas card featuring a group shot of characters from both libraries (Fred Flintstone standing right next to Bugs Bunny!). Over the holiday season, customers found for the first time Hanna-Barbera products for sale in the Warner Bros. Studio Stores nationwide. On the air, viewer are seeing *Space Jam* promotions and specials on Turner television networks. In production, many Hanna-Barbera staff are now working on WB TV animation shows, while Jean MacCurdy heads up Hanna Barbera Productions (she was formerly head of Warner Bros. TV Animation division). Turner Feature Animation's second and final product, *Cats Don't Dance* will be released this spring by Warner Bros.

AFI Offers Animation Classes.

The American Film Institute in Los Angeles will offer introductory workshops throughout January, February and March, focusing on fundamentals of 3D modeling, computer animation for interactive media and photo geometry. For information call (213) 856-7690.

--Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Desert Island Series . . . Animation Industry-ites

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

This month, we asked a few of our writers and people involved in the business of animation to list what films they would take with them if stranded on a desert island. Piet Kroon is a Dutch animator currently working on *The Quest for Camelot* at Warner Bros. Feature Animation. Georges Lacroix is president of the Paris computer animation studio, Fantome. Pat Raine Webb is President of ASIFA UK. Jerry Hibbert is Director of Hibbert-Ralph Animation Ltd. in London and Chairman of the Guild of British Animation. And right here in Hollywood, Steve Hulett and Jeff Massie deal with the business of animation as representatives for the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists' Union, Local 839 IATSE.

Piet Kroon's Top Ten picks...

1. *My Life As A Dog* by Lasse Halstrom, a beautiful swedish children's film . . . bittersweet like life itself.
2. *Manhattan* by Woody Allen, because not everyone gets corrupted.
3. *The Life of Brian* (Monty Python) by Terry Jones—the "bright side of life".
4. *101 Dalmatians* (animated) by Wolfgang Reithermann, Hamilton Luske and Clyde Geronomi. because I love the design of this film. It has great caricatured human characters for a change.
5. *The Big Snit* by Richard Condie. Brilliant fun. "Okay teens! Begin to saw!"
6. *Balance* by the Lauenstein Brothers. A perfectly balanced film, a clear idea finds its singular expression.
7. *Amarcord* by Federico Fellini. "Una Donna!" Great nostalgic tableaux of childhood, and very funny.
8. *A Good Turn Daily* by Gerrit van Dijk. Drop a quarter in the jukebox and watch the world spin.
9. *Elbowing* by Paul Driessen, because it is simple, efficient and eloquent.
10. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* by Steven Spielberg. Whats a desert island without a rollercoaster?



Piet Kroon



Georges Lacroix's favorites...

"I need to see all of these films again, as I have so much to learn from them."

1. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfts* by David Hand. I first saw it when I was five years old, and I knew at that time that I wanted to be an animator. I must also mention the movie behind this movie, which is Disney's *Cinderella*. If I had a big pocket, I would bring it too!
2. *Toy Story* by John Lasseter. I like this film so much because it is more about the emotion than the technology. Thank you Mr. John Lasseter, Mr. Ralph Guggenheim, and Pixar for proving that we are in a new era of animation. All of the new students born with the computer will open up a new very wide magic world of this art form. We will have many great surprises in the next 10 years. I would like to take my retreat or retirement and step back to watch the new art develop!
3. *Bad Luck Blackie* by Tex Avery. I'd like to bring the whole Tex Avery collection!
4. *Red Hot Riding Hood* by Tex Avery
5. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* by Tim Burton & Henry Selick, one of my favorite American animated movies.
6. *My Neighbor Totoro* by Hayao Miyazaki, the master of classic animation in Japan. I like *Totoro* because it is so sensitive, but of his other films I also love *La Puta*, *Porco Rosso*, and *Nausicaa*. Miyazaki is a genius. I love the ways of this man, he is great person.
7. *Flyer Tombs* by Isao Takahata, a film about the Hiroshima bomb. The animation gives the ability to pass emotion through the image with elegance.
8. *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otomo, the pioneer of new, avant garde animation in Japan.
9. *AOS* by Yoji Kuri. A very graphic film. I first saw it when I was a student. It shocked and inspired me. I like the generous ways of Kuri, who is serious yet not serious at the same time.
9. *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Frédéric Back. He is a great human being. There is much we can learn from him and his films. I had the honor and privilege to have the Fantôme exhibit accompany the exhibit of Frédéric Back at the Hiroshima Festival in 1996.
10. *Le Petit Soldat (The Little Soldier)* by Paul Grimault.
11. And for good luck!: *Topor* by Leopold Survage.

Pat Raine Webb's picks...

"If I do actually get stranded on a desert island I would really need a minimum of 100 favorites but these will do as a starter. I don't dare mention books or music, or I would need a whole issue of your magazine!"

Animation:

1. *The Big Snit* by Richard Condie, the funniest serious animated film to date.
2. *The Tale of Tales* by Yuri Norstein, a moving and beautiful Russian epic.
3. *Once There Was A Dog* by Edward Nazarov. This makes me laugh.
4. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by David Hand. This still makes me cry.
5. *What's Opera Doc?* by Chuck Jones. How could I leave this out?

Live Action:

1. *The Thief of Baghdad* by Ludwig Berger, Tim Whelan & Michael Powell. My all-time favorite film.
2. *Star Wars* by George Lucas. Can I have the trilogy please!
3. *E.T.* by Steven Spielberg. How wonderful to have a lovable alien instead of a revolting one.
4. *Stand by Me* by Rob Reiner. The best ever "coming of age" film.
5. *King Kong* by Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Schoedsack, The best ever "monster" movie

Jerry Hibbert's selections...

"Here they are in no particular order with a reason for choosing each—usually personal in some way."

1. *Yellow Submarine* by George Dunning, because George gave me my first job.
2. *Bambi* by David Hand. I watched my children watching this wide-eyed and learning about the circle of life.
3. *Gone in 60 Seconds* by H.B. Halicki. Pure car chase fun.
4. *Carry on Camping* by Gerald Thomas. English lavatorial humor at its best.
5. *The Girl Can't Help It* by Frank Tashlin—great music!
6. *Bullitt* by Peter Yates, because I always wanted a Dodge Charger and never got one.
7. *American Graffiti* by George Lucas, the perfect Saturday night out.
8. *Ice Cold in Alex* by J. Lee Thompson, because my father fought in the North African desert and took me to see this one as a boy.
9. *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola.
10. *The Godfather* by Francis Ford Coppola.



Jerry Hibbert



Jeff Massie's...

1. *Children of Paradise* by Marcel Carne.
2. *The General* by Buster Keaton.
3. *Great Expectations* by David Lean.
4. *The Invaders (49th Parallel)* by Michael Powell
5. *Jules and Jim* by François Truffaut.
6. *The Magnificent Ambersons* by Orson Welles.
7. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* by John Ford.
8. *Rules of the Game* by Jean Renoir.
9. *The Third Man* by Carol Reed.
10. *Yojimbo* by Akira Kurosawa.

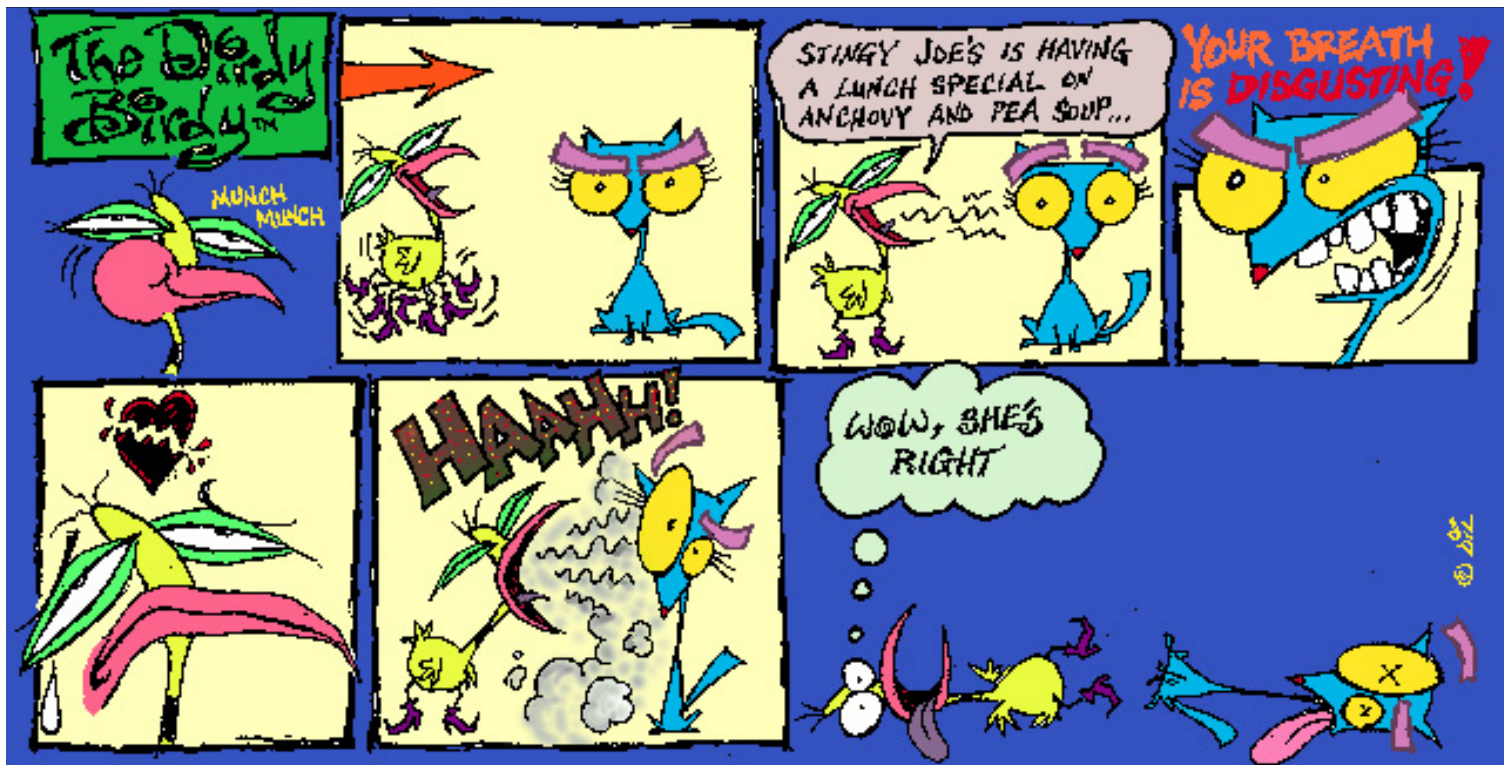
Steve Hulett's...



Caricature of Steve Hulett by Scott

1. *The Adventures of Robin Hood* by Michael Curtiz.
2. *Aladdin* by John Musker & Ron Clements.
3. *City Lights* by Charlie Chaplin.
4. *Gone With The Wind* by Victor Fleming.
5. *His Girl Friday* by Howard Hawks.
6. *How Green Was My Valley* by John Ford.
7. *The Sea Hawk* by Michael Curtiz.
8. *Spartacus* by Stanley Kubrick.
9. *The Thief Of Baghdad* by Raoul Walsh.

AWN Comics



The Dirty Birdy
by John R. Dilworth

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

March Issue Highlights



Focusing on the theme of Children and Animation, our next issue will address several related topics. Taking a look at children who create animation, we will publish a selective survey of children's animation programs around the world, with special attention to the ASIFA International's Children's Animation Workshops.

We'll explore the ways children's programs are sold around the world. We will learn all about the first animated musical for children on the Internet and who made it. Addressing social action in animation, we will have a story about the Trees for Life program, as well as an update of the UNICEF Animation Consortium, following the launch of UNICEF's official site on AWN.



Children & Animation	(March)
Music & Animation	(April)
Commercials	(May)
Education	(June)
Comic Books/Strips & Animation	(July)
Computer Animation	(August)
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